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Gita Darshan

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



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Gita Darshan



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Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

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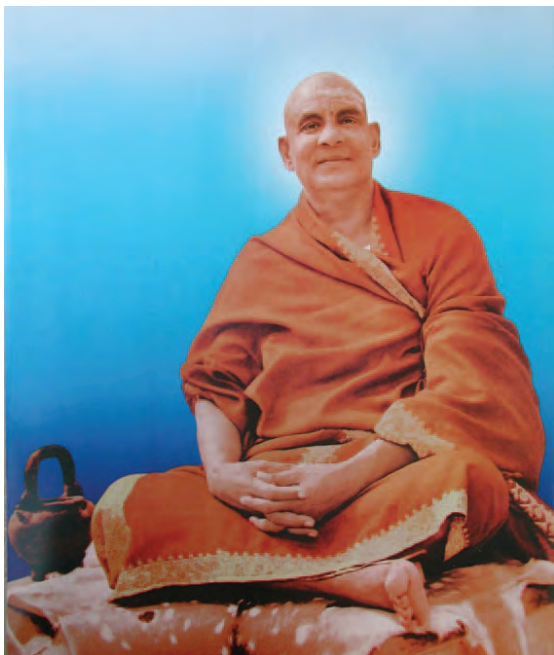
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

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First Discourse:

The Yoga of the Despondency of Arjuna

There are many different views of the *Bhagavad Gita*. One view is that it is a discussion at a time of crisis between Sri Krishna, an eminent personality of his time, and Arjuna, member of a royal dynasty who was also well versed in every form of science and art. A second view is that the entire discussion is more philosophical and spiritual in nature than practical. Why? It is because it deals with changes in attitude, perception and understanding that you have to experience within yourself. The transformations happen as there is a natural urge within you to know more about yourself and your relationship with the godly nature, therefore the *Bhagavad Gita* became a philosophical book for many people. The third view is that the *Bhagavad Gita* is a psychological discussion, as its teachings helped a well-documented case of neuroticism and psychoticism. The depressive neurotic was Arjuna, and in order to help him manage his conditions of depression, fear, uncertainty and loneliness, Sri Krishna had to give the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*. From the yogic perspective, each view of the discussion is important.

Historical background

One group of five brothers known as the Pandavas and another group of one hundred brothers known as the Kauravas had an inter-family feud. As a result, the Pandavas

were exiled. After the exile period was over, when they came to ask for the return of their share of the kingdom, they were refused by the Kauravas, “We will give you neither a single inch of your share of the property nor any of the assets of your kingdom. If you want it, it’s war and the winner takes everything!”

Both sides got their armies ready. The bugles, conches and drums sounded; both the commanders-in-chief started preparing their forces. The call was going to be given to begin the war. Sri Krishna was with the Pandavas as the charioteer of Arjuna, who mythology declares to be the greatest of archers.

Arjuna said to Sri Krishna, “Take me to the centre of the field from where I can observe both armies, see their strengths and weak points and see who there is to fight against.”

Sri Krishna said, “All right, you propose, I dispose,” and he took the chariot into the middle of the battlefield.

A change of heart

Arjuna looked at both sides, but he did not see any enemy. He only saw his family members; his grandfather, great grandfather, maternal uncle, paternal uncle, all the in-laws and their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The entire dynasty was there, divided into two camps, and he suddenly had a change of heart, or a change of mind. “These are the people I have to fight against? My own people? How? Why? Just to regain our kingdom we have to fight our own people? There will be casualties on both sides. Who knows who will survive and who will die? Even if we are the winners, what will we do with a dead kingdom? All the near ones, all the dear ones, kaput! Hari om tat sat! With whom will we enjoy the kingdom?” Arjuna went into a state of shock, and the decision he conveyed to Sri Krishna was, “This war is not worth fighting and I really don’t know what to do.”

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

Filled with deep pity he said sorrowfully,

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥

Seeing my own relatives gathered here desiring war, my mouth is becoming dry, there is trembling in my body, weakness in my limbs and my hair stands on end. My bow slips from my hand, it feels as though my body is on fire, I am disoriented, and feel I am losing control of myself. (1:28–30)

This is the first indication of his feelings that Arjuna has given to Sri Krishna. “Look, I’m not feeling good about fighting my own people. These are not my enemies, they are all my relatives or people who are known to me: my elders, associates and well-wishers. Therefore tell me, what should I do?”

Why did Arjuna feel like this? When you know a person there is a natural bond. You recognize them as your friend, your elder, your junior or companion; you recognize them. This binds you to the person. When you identify at an intellectual or emotional level, that person becomes dear to you. That is the beginning of attachment and the desire for personal pleasure and happiness also comes. You identify with your child, if he or she becomes sick or gets hurt you sit up all night; however, if someone else’s child is sick it doesn’t really matter to you, you are not affected.

Attachment and despair

Recognition of a person is the beginning of attachment, *asakti*. This sense of identification is affected by the three gunas. When it is *sattwic*, identification is pure; when *rajasic*,

it is dominating, domineering; and when *tamasic*, it implies holding, possessing, wanting, self-indulgence. All your connections and bondages are personal securities. When there is going to be a cutting asunder of the bondage of attachment for whatever reason, the final one being death, it leads to feelings of insecurity. When they are cut you begin to feel lonely, isolated, withdrawn, sometimes you become lost in memories, unaware of the actions you are performing at present or you experience a loss of connection with reality. This was the condition that Arjuna suddenly confronted when he saw his own people on both sides ready to die. He plunged into the question, “Why is this happening? Can’t the whole matter be solved through discussion? Is death necessary?”

When Sri Krishna saw Arjuna like this, slipping away into the deep recesses of his mind, he tried to entice him with three things: victory, kingdom and pleasure. He said to Arjuna, “Look, there is no use in becoming despondent like this and going into a depression. There is no hiding away from the reality of your dharma as a kshatriya. The dharma of a warrior is to fight when you have to. You don’t hide. The dharma of a warrior is to confront and not to hide or run away. If you fight, there are going to be deaths no doubt, as death is the final outcome whether you are defeated or victorious, but don’t you want to be victorious?”

Arjuna said, “No, I don’t want to be victorious.”

“You are strange, Arjuna, everybody in the world wants to be victorious and you are saying you want to be defeated! Don’t you know victory will give you a kingdom?”

“Kingdom! I don’t desire the kingdom, Krishna. Not an empty kingdom without people!”

“Okay, what about pleasure, fulfilment, happiness, joy?”

“What for? Only to enjoy it myself? No, I don’t want it.”

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥

I desire neither victory nor kingdom nor pleasure,
Krishna. Of what use will kingdom, luxuries or even
life be to us? (1:32)

What is the use of victory and pleasure in life when there is nobody left with whom you can share it? With death comes destruction of the social infrastructure and the economy, agriculture fails, factories are closed, there are no means of earning a livelihood, resources are not available. These are the normal considerations that a nation has to face.

The nation must always be self-sustaining with a good network of trade, skills and resources. During a war, all this collapses. The necessary skills are lacking in society to run the different levels of trade, industry and education as people struggle to regain their foothold, to feel a bit more stable and secure. This happened in many European countries after World War II, and it has happened many times in Asia and Russia. A nation survives on certain laws and norms which nurture its development. During war many infrastructures are destroyed and afterwards, with neither resources nor manpower available, the nation goes into depression.

Therefore Arjuna asks, “What will I do with such a useless situation? Even if I rebuild to again become a thriving kingdom, what will happen after I am gone? The whole thing will go to the dogs, as no lineage will survive after this mass civil war, and Krishna, let me tell you one more thing. My brothers and I are not greedy; we don’t want the kingdom back. We would be happy and satisfied with just five villages. It is not due to greed that we came to war, nor is it due to fear that I want to withdraw from the war. My reasons are the following. If we have war, only a few are going to live and for how long will those few survive, considering the number of their relatives they have killed with their own hands? They will be living in the fires of anxiety, fear and guilt; the entire kingdom will become a living hell. The proper genes will not be available, impure offspring will

result. Krishna, I can't think clearly and I'm losing touch with reality. I need to know what my duty is, what my *dharma* is. At present nothing is clear to me."

When Sri Krishna heard all this from Arjuna and saw Arjuna's indifference to the rewards of victory, he thought to himself, "This guy needs psychiatric help." He looked around the battlefield for a psychiatrist but none was available. As a result, Sri Krishna had to take up the role of a psychiatrist and the methods he used are described in the next seventeen chapters.



Second Discourse:

Samkhya Yoga

Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita* is known as *Samkhya Yoga*. Here *samkhya* means discovery. The ‘yoga of discovery’ can lead to a personal search for dharma, a search for the attainment of virtue and also towards physical, mental and spiritual fulfilment.

Arjuna was feeling extremely despondent and dejected. He sat down in his chariot and said, “Look, I’m not going to fight.” Sri Krishna tried to discover what was happening in his mind but Arjuna did not respond to his goading or stimulation. He did not respond to the bait of victory, kingdom, pleasure or security in life; these things did not have any meaning for him. Sri Krishna thought, “He has the symptoms of a person who is going through neurotic depression.” The discussion between them is reported in Chapter 2. Sri Krishna was prodding Arjuna, expecting him to get up and fight to fulfil the dharma of a warrior which is to establish virtue, justice and peace in the world.

Arjuna replied, “You know, I can’t motivate myself to fight. The reason is that I am attached to all these people. You see him over there? He’s my grandfather. You see over there? There is my uncle, there is my stepbrother, there is my brother-in-law. If I could consider everybody standing there to be my enemy, then I would have no problem. I would not be attached to these people physically, mentally, emotionally or in any form, rather I would be attached to the idea that I

have to destroy the enemy. I cannot, however, conceive of my own people as my enemy, and that is the reason why I can't fight. It has completely depleted my energy, my clarity, my knowledge of kshatriya dharma. I don't see any good coming out of this destruction."

At that time Sri Krishna asked him, "Why do you worry about becoming an instrument of destruction? Change your attitude. Instead of destruction, let it be transformation; transformation of an evil and restrictive environment into a more pious, virtuous and dynamic environment. If you are victorious, the people who support evil will go, the people who support virtue will remain. If the other side wins, evil will remain and virtue will be wiped out. It's time for a decision, so get up and fight! Consider this to be your aim in life: have a concept of dharma, justice and righteousness; perform action, but don't be attached to the results of the action."

The dharma of a kshatriya

One of the definitions of a *kshatriya* is 'one who is chosen to establish righteousness'. In Sri Krishna's mind it was clear what the dharma of a kshatriya is. He did not want Arjuna to go into a state of depression, which would make him incapable of following his kshatriya dharma, but he realized the validity of Arjuna's thoughts and emotions. When he saw Arjuna looking dejected, Sri Krishna asked, "Why are you, the knower of all that is right, the knower of all the scriptures, in this pitiful state of despondency? With what and to whom are you attached? There is absolutely no reason for any attachment, Arjuna, you just have to follow the dharma which pertains to you."

This is the theme of Chapter 2: recognize your dharma. Each life has its own dharma; you take birth and you die. There is no reason to become attached to birth or to fear death, as they only represent manifest aspects of life. The major part of life is connected with *atma*, spirit, the unseen dimension, where many currents are pushing and pulling the human nature and personality. If you are aware of these, you

will understand that everything in life is governed by a higher force and what you have to do is follow the path of karma yoga.

In karma yoga you continue to perform the karmas, but with the attitude of yoga sadhana. Karma is not acting to obtain pleasure, rather it is action that you are inspired to do for the welfare and benefit of everyone. Karma yoga is not done with the attitude of *aham karta*, 'I am the doer' or *aham bhokta*, 'I am the enjoyer', but with the attitude *Hari karta hi kevalam* – "The transcendental force is the doer, the enjoyer and the total experience." There is nothing in this world untouched by that experience. Air is all-pervading; it is the same air which you breathe and the whole world breathes. There is no compartmentalization of Asian, British or American air. Similarly, the completion of one's dharma is seen as a service to an all-pervading ideal, a service to God and humanity. Karma yoga is seen as the process of fulfilling one's dharma; it connects you to God, humanity, your ideal and your creativity.

Confusion of identity

Arjuna recognizes this. He says, "Yes, I know what is right and what is wrong, but I can't think straight."

Sri Krishna then replies, "Get your act together! Don't be in a state of 'Shall I, shall I not?' Don't pull the petals off a daisy in vain. Decide!"

"But how? At least tell me a way."

"Arjuna, look, you have to make the decision. You have to decide, recognizing that you need a solution to your problems and not just think about how to please yourself and delay the war. The war is inevitable. You may delay it for two or three hours while you make up your mind whether to fight or not, but even if you don't fight the war is going to take place, people are going to die. Don't identify with what is *anitya*, impermanent. You suffer when you identify with that. You have to get out of this dejection and confront your true self, your true nature. You have to accept your dharma, and do what we have all come here for." Then Arjuna says,

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥

My very being is tainted by faint-heartedness and my mind is confused as to duty. I am asking You to tell me decisively what is good; I am your disciple. Instruct me who has taken refuge in You. (2:7)

At this point, Arjuna is saying to Sri Krishna, “Look, I’m totally confused, I know what my dharma is and I also realize that those whom I’ll be fighting are not my enemies, but my own people. My long association with them, my feelings for them, my attachment to them means I can’t bear to kill them or have them killing my army. You may think this is cowardice and if you want to use that label, okay, use it. I know what I’m feeling, I’m living it. Does that make me weak? No. When I confront my own fears it means I’m stronger than any element of cowardice. Unfortunately, however, I’m totally confused. Due to my attachment there is conflict between my concepts of dharma and karma, between my concepts of duty, justice and righteousness and my own ambitions and desires. In this state I can’t do anything, I can’t think straight.”

Then Sri Krishna says, “Look, I’ve already told you to fight. At the same time, simply change your attitude from *sakama* and become *nishkama*; drop your self-oriented attitude and project your concern for the welfare of all. Nourish dharma.”

How to achieve steady wisdom

Arjuna said, “You have to guide me. I accept you as my teacher. I am your disciple; show me how to remove my doubts.”

Sri Krishna’s instruction begins, “Okay, now that you have accepted me as your teacher and you desire to learn, do one thing: control your mind.”

“But how? How do I control my mind?”

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥

Krishna, what are the characteristics of a God-realized soul, who is stable minded and established in samadhi? How does one of steady wisdom speak, sit and walk? (2:54)

Arjuna realizes that control of the mind is important not only in the mental, but also in the physical, spiritual and transcendental dimensions. If it is not achieved in the spiritual and transcendental dimension, you can't have the experience of divinity. If it is not achieved in the physical, manifest, material dimension you cannot be one-pointed, you cannot be successful in life. In order to succeed in material and spiritual life, control of the mind is important and he indicates the significance of both aspects by using the word samadhi. He wants to know the behaviour of a person who is absolutely in control of his mind, who is centred, who has attained samadhi. He wants to know how one becomes that controlled being.

Sri Krishna replies to him,

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

Arjuna, when one thoroughly abandons all cravings of the mind, and is satisfied in the self by the self, one is called a sage of steady wisdom. (2:55)

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

One whose mind remains unperturbed in sorrow, whose thirst for pleasure has altogether dissipated, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom. (2:56)

In these slokas, the salient points of the person who has controlled the mind have been described. When Sri

Krishna says ‘mind’, he is referring to the highest intellect of the Samkhya philosophy, *buddhi*. In the Samkhyan account of creation, the theory of causation describes the manifest dimension as an outcome of the union of *Purusha*, consciousness, and *Prakriti*, energy, with the potential to manifest. Out of their union, the first to come forth is *buddhi* or *mahat*, the great intelligence.

This great intelligence rules all the dimensions, animate and inanimate, the different elements, the levels of experiences within the elements, the levels of manifestation, the cause and effect operating within each dimension of every multidimensional element. It is also the ruler of the *gunas*: *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*. From this supreme intelligence there also manifests the *antahkarana*, the internal body, with its four interdependent, yet identifiably separate compartments known as *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahamkara*. In the context of the *Bhagavad Gita*, whenever Sri Krishna talks about mind, he doesn’t refer to *buddhi*, which is one compartment of the *antahkarana*, but to Samkhya’s concept of *buddhi* as the total mind, the great intelligence or *mahat*.

The word *sthitaprajna* is defined as the ability to hold the mind steady. *Sthita* means steady, *prajna* means experience, knowledge, wisdom. Therefore, *sthitaprajna* means steady wisdom, the focus and steadiness of that *buddhi* generally known as *mahat*. When one reaches beyond the compartmentalized mind to the supreme intelligence, the expressions, behaviour and personality of a person who interacts from that level is definitely not common, it is different from normal.

Sri Krishna said, “A person who has attained concentration and mental control has certain good qualities. The first symptom is being desireless and the second is contentment.” This is Sri Krishna’s philosophy in the *Bhagavad Gita*; you can attain peace of mind and steady wisdom by renouncing desires and by becoming content. It is not as if the absence of desires creates a vacuum that you need to fill, rather there is contentment and joy in the state of desirelessness. One

attains desirelessness by becoming content or joyous, so these two states are the final symptoms of a self-controlled person.

The other symptom of a person who is balanced, harmonious and of steady nature is a lack of attachment, fear and anger. Attachment to what? To human nature. If you attach yourself to human nature, you're always going to suffer. Fear of what? Insecurity is experienced when you pull away from something with which you were attached previously. Anger towards what? Aggressiveness is a symptom of a person who is expressing the rajasic quality.

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

Having restrained all the senses and collected the mind, one should sit for meditation on Me. For one whose senses are mastered, the mind becomes stable. (2:61)

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

One who gives up all desires and moves free from attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment, attains peace. (2:71)

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि बह्वनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥

Arjuna, this is the Brahmi sthiti or state of God-realization. Having attained this, one overcomes delusion. Being established in this state, even at the last moment, one attains oneness with Brahman. (2:72)

In sloka 61, Sri Krishna says that he who is of steady wisdom is full of restraint. He is able to restrain his senses from running wild; they focus, and this is *indriya sanyam*. By attaining a state without anger, fear or attachment you become free, as you have transcended the 'I' consciousness and attained peace. This state is known as Brahmi sthiti.

Transcendence – Brahmi sthiti

In the *Yoga Sutras*, Sage Patanjali lists the five vrittis: *pramana*, correct knowledge; *viparyaya*, wrong knowledge; *vikalpa*, imagination; *nidra*, disconnection; and *smriti*, memory. The spiritual aspect of the vrittis is *Brahmi vritti*, or *Brahmi sthiti*, the fixed, unchanging, expansive, self-aware vritti. The self-aware, individual consciousness is Brahmi vritti. A person who is the controller or master of the self, after going through all changes and transformations, ultimately attains Brahmi vritti. By the conclusion of Chapter 2, Sri Krishna has defined the basic structure of the human mind, how it can be detached from the objects of the world and come to experience this expansive nature.

It is in Chapter 2 that Sri Krishna has emphatically said to Arjuna, “You have the right to work. Don’t deny yourself that right. Do the work, but don’t be attached to it and don’t associate yourself with the results of action. There is nothing in this world which is without cause and effect, but the vital purushartha in life is to become detached, equipoised and balanced.”

“How?”

“By controlling the mind.”

Then Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna the meaning of a controlled and harmonious mind and nature: sthitaprajna. In order to attain sthitaprajna you need to go through the process of sadhana described in Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Sri Krishna likens the withdrawal of the mind to a turtle withdrawing its limbs into its shell; that is the state of pratyahara. He has also defined the qualities necessary for sthitaprajna, desirelessness and contentment, which in turn allow *mukti*, freedom from attachments, fear and aggression. Then there is no fluctuation, no *raga*, attraction, no *dvesha*, repulsion. Control of the senses also leads to freedom from ‘mineness’, and the egoless state leads you to *samadhi*, or the awareness and experience of Brahmi sthiti, the state where transcendence is experienced.

Third Discourse: The Yoga of Action

In Chapter 3, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna, “Which is better, knowledge or karma?” Sri Krishna replies, “Recognize your duty. Get up and act. Fulfil your duty.” That is instruction into *karma*, action. At the same time, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he should have a firm, equipoised and balanced mind, that he should observe and analyze, which means Sri Krishna is eulogizing the aspects of knowledge, wisdom, self-discipline and practice. Therefore, Arjuna asks, “Which is better?”

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥

Krishna, if you consider knowledge to be superior to action, why do you urge me to this dreadful action? (3:1)

Karma or jnana?

At the very outset, Arjuna poses this question. Originally, Sri Krishna taught that action and knowledge are equally important. Then he eulogized knowledge and wisdom by saying that it leads to *Brahmi stithi*, the experience of the expansive transcendental nature which gives peace and which is a rare commodity. This prompts Arjuna’s question, “It seems that you emphasize the knowledge aspect more than the karma aspect and if so, why are you inspiring me, pushing me, goading me to become an instrument of devastation by undertaking this destructive karma?”

“Look Arjuna, karma is your nature. You cannot avoid karma; it is something you are bound to do, something that is an integral part of you. Life without karma is no life, and karma without life is no karma. The relationship between life and karma is the same as that between you and the air you breathe. Can you stop breathing the air around you? If you did, what would happen? You would die. There is a similar association between the boon of life and karma. Karma is an integral part of you; it is an inherent ability in life which expresses itself naturally. Wisdom, or *jnana*, is something for which you have to train your mind. You train your intellect to increase its ability to receive, hold, realize, experience and experiment with the different forms of karma.”

Sri Krishna said emphatically that nobody can be without karma.

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥

Surely, none can remain inactive even for a moment; everyone is driven helplessly to action by the gunas or qualities born of Nature. (3:5)

Sri Krishna is saying that in life there are two kinds of attainments. One kind comes through karma, when you do something and you reap the results of it. The second type of attainment comes through wisdom, *jnana*, and when you come to a realization, you reap the fruit of that realization whether it be in the material or spiritual world. You all have a philosophy but you never follow it. Karma is always more dominant than your personal philosophy, beliefs or ideas, therefore you seem to be more attracted to the dimension of karma than the dimension of *jnana*.

Karma yoga

If you make your karma into karma yoga, then you harvest the riches in your life. How? How can a karmic activity

become a karma yoga activity? If you can control your senses, then your behaviour and actions become karma yoga.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥

But Arjuna, whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, undertakes karma yoga with the organs of action without attachment, excels. (3:7)

Sri Krishna is saying, “Only those people who have attained sense control excel or succeed in life, and that is what affects their behaviour and action.” To reach the ideal aim of karma yoga one needs *indriya nigraha*, sense control, nothing more than that. The five *jnanendriyas*, the senses of cognition, the five *karmendriyas*, the senses of action, and the mind, comprised of manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara, must be controlled. By controlling the senses a change happens in your way of thinking, analyzing, behaving, acting, planning and implementing. These new qualities in your personality and performance will be recognized as the qualities of a karma yogi. Therefore, make an effort to attain this as you cannot neglect karma in life, you are bound by karma. Karmas are performed by the senses in all dimensions, as they are subject to the three gunas; karma is not free from the effect of gunas.

There is a paradox here, as some people can become free from the effect of karma. They are those who identify not with the world, but with the Cosmic Self. This idea has been presented in the following slokas:

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥

However, one who takes delight in the Self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the Self, has no duty. (3:17)

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥

That great Soul has no use whatsoever for things done,
nor for things not done, nor has selfish dependence of
any kind on any creature. (3:18)

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds for Me to
do, nor is there anything worth attaining or unattained
by Me, yet I continue to work. (3:22)

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥

Arjuna, as the unwise act with attachment, so should
the wise man, seeking maintenance of the world order,
act without attachment. (3:25)

Sri Krishna has been clear and direct in saying that there are very few people who can be free from the effect of karmas. It is only those people who have identified with the Cosmic Self rather than with the material world, who have no concern with the material, physical dimension of experience that can attain this ability. Such people are not bothered by raga and dwesha, or by happiness and sadness. They always live in the dimension of *atma*, the Cosmic Self, but for that, perfection in sadhana is required or you won't be able to transcend your nature.

Freedom from the gunas

For those people who do attain this ability to identify with the Cosmic Self, there is no longer a need to perform any kind of karma in this world, as karma for them will be without potential. It will be free from the colouring of tamas, rajas and sattwa; therefore, it will not give any seed or fruit. Karma will simply be done as an act, as one cannot live without actions. Sri Krishna offered himself as an example

to Arjuna saying, “I Myself don’t desire anything in life, have never craved anything in life, have no obligations towards anybody and no commitments, nobody to answer to and no expectations. I am just living My life, following My dharma. Even so, I have to follow the karma associated with dharma despite My not having any desire.”

Just as people who are attached to the results of karma perform an action, the karma yogi performs the same action but without expectation. This is the only difference between karma which leads to suffering and karma which leads to contentment. Karma which leads to suffering is attached, identified and associated with fruits. Karma which leads to freedom is detached from the results of action. There is no difference in activity but the ignorant follow the pattern of karmas maintaining absolute identification with the karmas, “I am doing it for myself, for my welfare, for my prestige, for my status.” Whereas the karma which is done by a knowledgeable person, a *jnani*, is the same action but the ideas associated with it are totally different. The *jnani* is performing the karma as his offering, *seva*, or sacrifice, *yajna*. He is devoting everything to it, and he also knows that all the karmas are the result of the interaction of the gunas.

The guna is the catalyst in creating a karma. If one is tamasic, rajasic or sattwic in nature, the motivations coloured by these three gunas will come up and give birth to different kinds of thought, desire and action. Therefore, recognizing that life is an interaction of gunas with karmas, mind and emotions, you should see their play, their effects and interactions, yet remain in the spirit, the atman, where you are not shaken by the quirks of nature or fate.

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्न्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥

Therefore, dedicating all actions to Me, with your mind fixed on Me, the Self of all, freed from hope and the feeling of egoism and cured of mental fever, fight. (3:30)

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेताौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥

Attraction and repulsion are rooted in all sense objects.
Man should never come under their sway because these
are the two main stumbling blocks. (3:34)

Sri Krishna is saying, “Divert your action from negative to positive, from restrictive to expansive, by surrendering everything and fixing your mind in the spiritual essence of your being. Surrender everything to me.”

This is the stage of Ishwara pranidhana in which one says, “I am not responsible for my karma, I am doing it as my *kartavya dharma*, my natural duty.” The understanding of dharma has to be based on proper knowledge of the virtuous, auspicious, uplifting nature of every situation, circumstance, thought and action. That is how you have to live.

Freedom from opposites

Remain alert so that *raga*, attraction, and *dvesha*, repulsion, do not affect your nature, as they are the real enemies in your life. In every sense organ there is the potential of attraction and repulsion. Eyes can attract and repel, speech can attract and repel, personal behaviour can attract and repel, even breathing can attract and repel. Do you know that your breathing can attract and repel? You are passing by somebody and you just give an appreciative sniffing sound. What kind of response or reaction will it evoke in the other person? Attraction and repulsion are inherent qualities of every sense organ. You have to be aware of that aspect, as both *raga* and *dvesha* are great enemies; they are not your well-wishers, therefore you should not be influenced by either of them. They go in the opposite direction to something which is auspicious or blissful. They go against the inner direction of every individual. You don't want *dvesha* and yet it is always there. You don't want *raga* either

when it becomes problematic, yet it is there, so you must be watchful of these things.

Freedom from passion and anger

Arjuna says, “I can understand what you are saying, but tell me, why do some people feel a compulsion to act in certain ways? There is obsessive attachment with a karma, and the desires and thoughts associated with a particular karma often compel a person to do something which is totally against their innermost personal nature. What is that force of compulsion?”

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्येय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥

Krishna, impelled by what does man commit sin involuntarily, as though driven by force? (3:36)

Sri Krishna replies,

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

His desire is anger born of the quality of rajas, insatiable and grossly wicked; know this as the enemy in this case. (3:37)

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥

Therefore, Arjuna, first controlling the senses, kill this wicked desire which obscures knowledge of the unmanifest and manifest divinity. (3:41)

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

Thus, Arjuna, knowing that which is higher than the intellect and subduing the mind by reason, kill this enemy in the form of desire that is hard to overcome. (3:43)

The compulsion is due to *kama*, passion or desire; *krodha*, aggression or motivation; *rajogunasamudbhavah*, that which comes forth from rajoguna. Kama and krodha are the offspring of rajoguna. Sri Krishna is telling Arjuna that all karmas are guided by passion and aggression. In the absence of human passion and aggression born of the rajasic nature, karmas will not exist. Passion is aggressive when it is unfulfilled, and passive when it is fulfilled. It is this *kama*, obsession, passion, desire, which can take control of the entire human personality and is then the most dangerous and sinful one. It is the greatest sinner, as it is the cause of our downfall.

Passions can control the entire personality, but a real karma yogi, a real jnani, is able to kill the seed of this passionate or desiring force and become free from the effect of raga and dwesha. Recognize that your passions are only shadows of the potential that exists in atma, but while only being shadows, they are very powerful. Therefore, it is your duty to become aware of your passions and desires before you attempt to transcend and transform the attitudes and feelings associated with karma.



Fourth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Division of Wisdom

Sri Krishna explains that it is the passionate and aggressive nature of rajas which makes your mind neurotic, psychotic and obsessive. Then you are confused, you do not think right, and there are many situations which you are unable to handle and which leave impressions that you cannot manage. If you are able to eradicate the obsessive nature of personal desire from the karma, then you will be recognized as a jnani who practises karma yoga. This is actually the secret of karma yoga. Sri Krishna further tells Arjuna, “It is only after a long time that I am describing the benefits and effects of karma yoga to you, as until now nobody has understood how to separate or detach himself from the karmas.” With this, Sri Krishna begins Chapter 4:

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुर्दिक्षाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥

I taught this immortal yoga to Vivasvan, the Sun god, Vivasvan conveyed it to Manu, his son, and Manu imparted it to his son, Ikshvaku. (4:1)

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥

Thus, handed down in regular succession Arjuna, this yoga remained known to the royal sages. After a

long lapse of time, however, it has more or less been destroyed. (4:2)

In these slokas, Sri Krishna is admitting that the knowledge of karma yoga and the understanding of karma had been almost totally lost from the tradition. After many, many eons he is again describing the science of karma yoga, as it is a difficult subject. It is difficult to detach oneself from karma. However, if you can understand the essence, meaning and purpose of karma yoga, if you can experience contentment in the performance of karma, and if you can renounce attachments and expectations, then you come closer to the godly nature.

Symptoms of spiritual progress

Somebody once asked Sri Swamiji, “How can we recognize that we are progressing in spiritual life?”

Sri Swamiji replied, “By the lessening of desires and the redirection of the force of ego.”

As you perfect one of the two, there is the tendency to become acutely aware of your karma and the association of that karma with your nature. The godly nature of every individual has to transcend time, space and object. If your nature is bound by these three, it cannot be conceived of as godly nature, as that has always represented a state of higher perception and transcendental awareness. This idea has been emphasized in sloka 10:

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥

Completely rid of attachment, fear and anger, wholly absorbed in Me, depending on Me and purified by the fire of wisdom, many have become one with Me. (4:10)

Attachment, fear and anger, these are the three manifestations of karma. When you are attached to the karma there is a feeling of “I am doing it, involved in it, identifying

with it.” Second comes fear. You worry that your desires may not be fulfilled and insecurity comes from too many such thoughts in the mind. Anger is attached to the karma and is also due to self-identification.

Freedom from obsession

These three things: attachment, fear and anger, combined together are known as passion. It is due to such passion that you become obsessive about a thought, an idea, an object, an animate or inanimate being. Mira Bai loved a stone idol; the object of her passion was inanimate. For Romeo, the object of his passion was an animate being. Once you realize how to separate yourself from these passions and recognize the three items for what they are, that is, offshoots of karma, then karma no longer binds you; it becomes a mere act. At that level, karmas do not bind you as they are performed with total *vairagya*, dispassion, and *viveka*, discrimination, along with the ideas of justice and righteousness. There is no selfishness, and although everybody recognizes such selfless karmas as the essence of karma yoga, this essence has never been perfected by anyone.

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

One whose undertakings are all free from desire and worldly purposes, and whose actions are burnt up in the fire of wisdom, even the wise call a sage. (4:19)

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

One who has subdued mind and body, given up all objects of enjoyment and has no craving, incurs no sin performing bodily action. (4:21)

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥

One who is content with whatever comes unsought for, is free from jealousy and the pairs of opposites, and is balanced in success and failure, though acting, is not bound. (4:22)

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥

One whose attachment is gone, whose mind is established in knowledge and who works for the sake of sacrifice, all actions of that liberated person melt away. (4:23)

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

Brahman is the oblation, Brahman is the ghee, by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman, surely Brahman shall be reached by one who always sees Brahman in action. (4:24)

Sri Krishna has given the essence of karma yoga and has said that one has to perform the right actions without obsession, personal motivation or passion and with wisdom. Ultimately, when wisdom guides actions, then all the emanations of the mind: attachment, raga, dwesha, personal identification and self-oriented motivation, are burned in the fire of wisdom like twigs. At the same time, there is no feeling of a vacuum, rather you experience joy, contentment, fulfilment, and that is your inner nature. That is what you have to be, Brahman. That is what you offer, that is what you receive. That is what you are.

Learn to perform the right action without obsession, passion or personal expectations. Learn to allow the wisdom of the present to guide your actions. If you do this and experience contentment then you are recognized as the non-doer. To be happy in the state of non-doership is the approach of karma yoga.

Master of mind and senses

One must have control of the senses and the mind. If you have mastery of the senses and you are able to leave cravings for sense objects, then that is the state of *sanyam*. In that state of freedom and karmic liberation you don't commit any sin; all actions are part of a cosmic plan, a cosmic movement. The cosmos, nature, is developing, expanding and evolving, and every person is part of that process. You go beyond the normal tamasic tendencies of the mind, beyond jealousy, greed and grief. You go beyond dualities, the happiness or sadness associated with karma. You experience that state of inner freedom which is the highest state of Brahman, as there you identify with the Cosmic Self and not with yourself as an independent, individual unit. There you are the Brahman; what you are is Brahman, what you offer is Brahman, what you receive is Brahman, the result is also Brahman, part of the cosmic identity.

The restrictions of the karmas can be removed through the right application of jnana. If you allow wisdom to guide karma, that is the state of jnana yoga, as it is through dispassion and discrimination that you destroy the doubts that are associated with yourself, your environment, your karmas, expectations and attachments. Discrimination dispels doubts, so Sri Krishna instructs Arjuna that combining viveka with karma frees one from the bondage of karma.

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥

As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes. (4:37)

योगसन्न्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥

One who has dedicated all actions to God in the spirit of karmayoga, whose doubts have been dispelled by wisdom, and who is self-possessed is not bound to actions. (4:41)

In these last slokas, Sri Krishna has further emphasized the coming together of jnana and karma, wisdom and action. He says that those who have perfected karma yoga offer their karmas to the Cosmic Self, the cosmic reality. They destroy all their doubts through discrimination and control the four faculties of mind contained in the antahkarana: manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara, and then karmas do not bind them. Therefore, remove the doubt created by self-generated ignorance, destroy its seed in the fire of your wisdom, and establish yourself in the equipoised state of karma yoga. Get up, get ready and fight.

Union of karma and jnana

Chapter 4 is *Jnana Karma Sannyasa Yoga* and this name summarizes its three main ideas: *jnana*, wisdom; *karma*, action; and *sannyasa*, renouncing the fruits of action. The philosophy of Chapter 4 is that you must have attainment through the practice of karma yoga. In the context of karma yoga, it has also given practical psychological techniques to help overcome the fluctuating mind by becoming free of *raga*, attraction or attachment, *bhaya*, fear, and *krodha*, anger.

Chapter 4 also says that jnana, the aspect of wisdom or applied knowledge, and karma, action, have to merge together so that jnana becomes active and alive, and karma becomes free from the bondage of sattwa, rajas and tamas. This gives freedom from both sides; freedom as you are living in wisdom and freedom as actions are not creating any further karmas along the way.

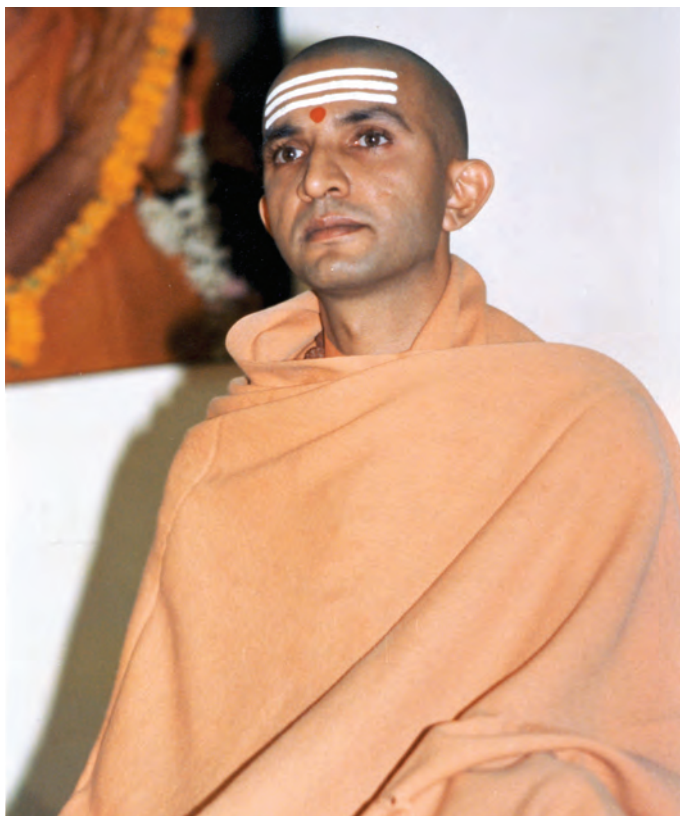
Sannyasa represents the aspect of renunciation and one of the prerequisites of sannyasa is that you have to renounce expectations and attachments.

The entire gist of Chapter 4 is found in sloka 42:

तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृतस्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छित्त्वेनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥

Therefore, Arjuna, cutting asunder with the sword of knowledge this doubt in your heart born of ignorance, establish yourself in karma yoga and stand up for the fight. (4:42)

Taking up the sword is an action, a karma, but the form of the sword is wisdom. So karma and jnana have combined together and you are, through sannyasa, cutting yourself off from the doubting nature. That is sannyasa. If you truly ask yourself what is the ultimate aim of sannyasa, you realize it is the elimination of the doubting nature.



Fifth Discourse:

The Yoga of Renunciation of Action

In this chapter we are introduced to the idea of a *nitya sannyasi*, one who is constant in sannyasa.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥

He should be known as a constant sannyasi who neither hates nor desires; for, free from the pairs of opposites Arjuna, he is easily set free from bondage. (5:3)

This sloka intensifies the idea conveyed in Chapter 4: the karma yogi who neither rejects nor has aversion to anything, and who has no expectations and no desires associated with actions, is to be recognized as a sannyasi.

Tyaga and karma yoga

This definition of sannyasa given by Sri Krishna represents the state of renunciation, *tyaga*, as an ideal which is not directed towards the self, but towards a transformative, transcendental association. Such tyagis, as they are free from attractions and repulsions, attain freedom from the bondages of the physical and material dimension and are able to achieve the highest karma of offering all karmas to Brahman. Such people are able to achieve the highest state of being; they are the true sannyasins.

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥

Arjuna, renunciation of doership is hard to attain without yoga. The man of meditation, purified by devotion to action, quickly goes to Brahman. (5:6)

Without karma yoga, renunciation of the objects of the senses is not attainable. What is sannyasa? Sannyasa is renouncing, or absolutely separating oneself from the idea of ‘doership’ related to the activities of the body, mind and senses, and this renunciation comes with knowledge; it is not due to rejection. Renunciation, accompanied by rejection of something in society, is only a reaction. We call it *smashan vairagya*, the *vairagya* of a person who goes to visit a graveyard, sees himself surrounded by so many dead bodies and begins to think, “Oh my God, is this the totality of human life? Do we live only to become like this? What use is there in living in the world then? It is better to say Hari Om Tat Sat!”

True renunciation comes with knowledge, it comes with wisdom and the wisdom is not a fixed idea, rather it is an evolving, expanding, developing awareness. Jnana comes alive and awareness of the karmas comes alive. This awareness is of the future results of karma, and with this awareness comes acceptance. This is the form of wisdom that has been defined in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

नैव किंचित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशज्जिघ्रस्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्चसन् ॥
प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥

The centred knower of truth, even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating or drinking, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, letting go, holding on, opening and closing the eyes, is convinced, ‘I do nothing at all’, that it is only the senses that move among the objects. (5:8–9)

Sri Krishna is describing how the karma yogi and jnana yogi are of the same state of mind. He says, “When wisdom dawns, you are aware of everything you see, hear, touch, smell, eat or perform. You are aware of sleep, breath, speech; you are aware of whatever you are accepting or renouncing, even when you are opening and closing the eyes. Simultaneously, you are aware it is all as the senses are performing their duties.” This is the type of awareness which dawns in a jnani. Each sense is performing its duty; that is the dharma of every indriya. It is the dharma of nature composed of the experiences of different indriyas which make up Prakriti. Through wisdom one has to know, ‘I do not do anything’. Through wisdom, one has to renounce the idea of doership.

Further, he says that when this kind of idea dawns in the human consciousness, the realization takes place that all the actions being performed by the karma yogi are being guided towards the experience of inner harmony and inner purity, *atma shuddhi*.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥

The karma yogi performs action only with the body, mind, senses and intellect, forsaking achievement for the purification of the heart. (5:11)

True renunciation is total detachment from the identification process between the self and the body, senses, mind and intellect, even when the senses are engaged in identifying an object, the mind in recognizing an idea and buddhi in creating an image.

Sadhana for inner purity

The ultimate experience in this process of transformation of karma, is the state of inner purity which is free from every kind of attraction or aversion. There is only stillness, contentment, fulfilment and expansiveness. Sri Krishna then explains how it is possible to attain this state:

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥

Shutting out external contacts, fixing the eyes between the eyebrows, equalizing the even currents of prana and apana inside the nostrils, controlling the senses, mind and intellect, with moksha as the supreme goal, free from desire, fear and anger, such a man of meditation is truly free forever. (5:27-28)

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥

Knowing Me as the enjoyer of sacrifice and asceticism, as the great Lord of all worlds, and as the friend of all beings, he attains peace. (5:29)

Here, Sri Krishna has explained the method of meditation leading to the development of awareness. Previously, Sri Krishna mentioned that only when a person is able to suffer the tremors created by the movement of passion, fear and anger and remain centred, can he be called a yogi and be content.

Kama, passion, and *krodha*, anger, are two difficult vrittis over which intellectual or voluntary control cannot be asserted. These are forces which can shake the foundation of an individual's nature in a split second. If you are able to attain that level of mind control, if you are master of the senses, and if the purpose of your life is to experience inner purity and freedom, then this sadhana develops that awareness further by focusing your mind internally.

The method is to first disengage yourself from identification with the outer objects of sensory pleasure. Leave those experiences outside and don't even retain them as part of memory. Try not to think of the future or the past, then there

will not be a need to create or retain a memory; just leave all those outside experiences. Second, focus your vision, your awareness, at the eyebrow centre. Third, harmonize the activity of prana vayu and apana vayu flowing through the nostrils. During respiration, prana accompanies the inhalation and apana accompanies the exhalation. Practise breathing through pingala nadi with the inhalation and through ida nadi with the exhalation, then through ida with the inhalation and pingala with the exhalation.

As a result of perfecting these three different stages while meditating, you enter a state where you are not thinking, not identifying; you are disassociated from the objects of sensory perception and become free of desire, fear and anger. When you remain free, totally unselfish, compassionate and loving, you realize peace.

The need for jnana was explained in Chapter 4 and reiterated again here in Chapter 5. After establishing the need for jnana, the description of how to renounce the fruits of action and how to disassociate from karma is given here. Therefore, the name of this chapter is *Karma Sannyasa Yoga*.



Sixth Discourse:

The Yoga of Meditation

Previously, Sri Krishna defined the meaning of *sannyasa* as renunciation associated with wisdom and the awareness, perception, and knowledge of karma. Wisdom is not a fixed thought or idea, rather it is the evolving, expanding awareness. As the awareness develops it lights up a greater area in the entire field of consciousness. In Sanskrit, the conscious, subconscious and unconscious are referred to as the *sthula* or gross, the *sukshma* or subtle, and the *karana* or causal areas of consciousness, and these are progressively revealed. It is this all-encompassing awareness that is recognized as wisdom.

In Chapter 6, Sri Krishna continues the same line of thought:

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निरन चाक्रियः ॥

One who does his duty without expecting the fruit of action is a *sannyasi* and a *yogi*, not one who has merely renounced the sacred fire and all activity. (6:1)

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥

Arjuna, know that what they call *sannyasa* is the same as *yoga*, for none becomes a *yogi* who has not given up thoughts of the world. (6:2)

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥

For the sage who wishes to rise to the heights of karma yoga, disinterested action is said to be the means. For the same sage, when he is established in yoga, absence of all thoughts of the world is said to be the means. (6:3)

Sannyasa and yoga

The person who is recognized as a sannyasi or as a yogi is not dependent on the results of action. However, the person who has merely renounced all actions is neither a sannyasi nor a yogi. What is meant by renouncing the thoughts? The word used is *sankalpa*, which implies desire. What is the focus of attention in desire? Every desire will have a different focus. With some desires you will experience happiness, contentment or fulfilment, with others you will experience sadness, quietness, withdrawal; it all depends on the type of *sanyam* or restraint that you perfect. One needs absolute restraint in all dimensions while accepting that karmas are an inherent part of all the senses. It is a matter of not attaching yourself with the karmas, not identifying with the sensorial activity or with name, form and idea in the world of time, space and object. Only those who have perfected the performance of karma with total dispassion can be called sannyasis, renunciates or yogis. Selfless action is a requirement for the state of sannyasa.

At the same time, one has to be desirous of establishing oneself in *yoga*, union, between the gross nature and the cosmic nature. It is this definition of *yoga* that Sri Krishna has pointed to over and over again in different ways, in different chapters. The yogic vision of Sri Krishna is the harmony of karmas with *jnana*. *Jnana* has to be *nishkama*, without selfish drive, without any personal motivation attached to the knowledge. Knowing the dharma associated with every karma leads to the experience of peace and the divine transcendental bliss of *ananda*.

Karma yoga and self-awareness

It is also important to have a reflective and discriminative mind so you can analyze, observe and realize your thoughts. The quality of a reflective mind is that you can see the different feelings, concepts, beliefs and expectations associated with a thought. To discover your own nature it is necessary to have a discriminative mind without any selfish expressions and experiences; you live as part of the universe, not for yourself.

These are the essential items in order to become a karma yogi as you need to develop self-awareness. It is you who are the cause of either your downfall or enlightenment. If you are able to guide the total personality, the senses and the mental faculties, then you become your own friend. When you allow the force of the senses or the mind to pull and push and buffet you, and you undergo the pain, agony, happiness and joy of that buffeting, then you become your own enemy. If you reflect carefully, you will agree with this. The person who can keep himself restrained is the one who attains enlightenment. The person who allows the lower forces to pull and push the mind begins to hate himself or herself and, as these things manifest as different traits, you become your own worst enemy and that is the cause of your downfall.

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥

One's own Self is the friend of that soul by whom the lower self is conquered, but to the unconquered self, this Self stands like an enemy. (6:6)

Training the mind

At this point, Arjuna remarks that the nature of mind is always fluctuating.

“Yes,” replies Sri Krishna, “the mind and senses will always fluctuate. There is no way of stopping them; there is no way you can fight them, although you can train yourself.

You can silence the vrittis that are emerging in your mind and disturbing you.”

“Do you mean that by silencing the vrittis, I can control my mind?”

“Yes, you can. The state of silence, stability and peace in the vrittis is the experience of divinity; it is the experience of the transcendental nature. However, you have to work hard, Arjuna, don’t forget that, as you need to be aware of your karmas, not just be aware of your mind.”

Mind has desire, thought and motivation, and karma is the action of the senses to fulfil or express the mind in whatever form, therefore you must work from both sides. From the karmic side you disassociate yourself from the karmas, withdraw your involvement and participation in the karmas and maintain the philosophy of ‘Let Thy will be done.’ From the mental side, centralize your mind. By stabilizing the mind you will have more focus, awareness and reflective power. You will be in better control of your karmas with these faculties of the awakened mind.

The outcome of such a sadhana, such discipline, is the attainment of an unwavering state of mind. A candle flame will burn steadily in a room where there is no current of air, but the moment there is movement in the air, the candle flame will flicker. The state of unwavering attention is achieved when your mind becomes one-pointed and harmonious, without disturbance from the karmas.

Sadhana to silence the vrittis

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥

Let the yogi try constantly to keep the mind steady, living in seclusion, alone, with the mind and body controlled, free from desire and possession. (6:10)

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥

In a clean spot, having firmly placed his seat, neither very high nor very low, made of a cloth, a skin and kusha grass one over the other, (6:11)

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥

Being seated there, making the mind one-pointed, controlling the function of mind and the senses, one should practise yoga for self-purification. (6:12)

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥

Keeping the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, remaining firm and looking at the nosetip, without looking in other directions, (6:13)

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारित्रिते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥

Pledged to brahmacharya, fearless, keeping himself perfectly calm and with the mind thoroughly under control and fixed on Me, the vigilant yogi should sit absorbed in Me. (6:14)

Sri Krishna has just described a technique that is part pratyahara and part dharana to silence the vrittis of the mind. In the beginning, it is similar to the practice of *antar mouna*, inner silence.

Sri Krishna says, “Find a quiet spot where you can be alone and still, free from every kind of accumulation and desire, and control your senses. In such a place, arrange an asana mat on the floor whether it be made of cloth, skin or grass. Adopt your asana and focus the mind. Make your mind one-pointed by managing all the actions of manas, chitta and the senses, which is the state of pratyahara. Then move into dharana by holding the mind steady and practise yoga for purification of the inner self, *atma shuddhi*.”

The inner self is that inner being composed of mind, intellect, memory and ego. To practise yoga for the purification, focus your attention on the nose tip in *nasikagra drishti* and maintain the attitude, ‘I am desirous of learning; I want to be a *jignasu*.’ With this feeling you have to be of tranquil heart. There should be no fear, no insecurity, no agitation and no expectation of either increase or decrease. “Just be peaceful and think of Me as the highest goal.”

Sri Krishna is emphasizing the perfection of dharana, where you hold on to or maintain a concept.

Arjuna says:

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥

Krishna, I do not perceive the stability of this yoga of equanimity which you have taught, due to restlessness of the mind. (6:33)

चञ्चलं हि मनःकृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोऽखि सुदुष्करम् ॥

Krishna, the mind is very unsteady, turbulent, strong and powerful, therefore I consider it as difficult to control as the wind. (6:34)

Arjuna says, “How do you expect me to control a mind like this? When you are speaking, it sounds easy, but for me in my present state of mind, when I am unable to focus, I feel that it is difficult to achieve. The mind is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding. It doesn’t submit to anybody.”

Abhyasa for atma sanyam

“Yes, Arjuna, what you are describing is the nature of the mind, but what I am saying is that through practice and constancy you can train yourself to acknowledge, realize and become the master of the mind.”

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥

The mind is, without a doubt, unsteady and difficult to curb Arjuna, but it can be controlled through practice and dispassion. (6:35)

The mind may be governed through practice, *abhyasa*, and through dispassion, *vairagya*. One has to continue with practice in order to excel and succeed in sadhana. While realizing that the nature of the mind is to be restless, jumpy and flirtatious, maintain the focus of mind. This you will attain through practice and through dispassion, non-attachment to action. Such a state is the state of a true yogi.

The true yogi has a higher level of enlightenment, realization, than people who perform austerities, who know the scriptures, who are philosophers or great thinkers. They have a higher status than those who perform motivated and unmotivated actions. Therefore, ultimately my advice is that you become a yogi. This advice is reflected in sloka 46:

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

The yogi is superior to the ascetics, he is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, become a yogi. (6:46)

This is known as *atma sanyam yoga*, the yoga of self-restraint, where one harnesses the potential of both the senses and mind. The state of *dharana*, absolute concentration, where one can hold the state of concentration with awareness fixed in the cosmic consciousness, is attainable through *atma sanyam*.

Karma yoga, the theme of first six chapters

In the first six chapters, the *Bhagavad Gita* covers the aspects of human participation in the activities and experiences of life. It says you should understand that the karmas are an inherent and integral part of your life. The karmas are coloured by the three gunas which give the self the experiences of pain and suffering through *dwesha*, repulsion, and happiness and joy through attraction, *raga*.

Mixing the gunas with karma also gives birth to a third thing, *bhava*, or attitude. Bhava is of two kinds: *sakama*, with desire and *nishkama*, desireless. The majority of people identify with *sakama karma*, action with desire. Only a few aspire to understand the *nishkama karma* state, where action is performed without desire. Nishkama karma is recognized as selfless action. Awareness and action have to merge into one; awareness must be complemented by wisdom. Through wisdom you must be aware of the right and the wrong, the constructive and the destructive, the dharmic and the adharmic. Then, karma is identified with the higher concept; one realizes, 'I am not the doer, I am not the enjoyer, I am only an actor.' Such wisdom channels the mind so that it experiences tranquillity, peace, happiness and complete fulfilment.

Understanding of karma, management of karma, transformation of karma, these are the themes that have been defined in the first six chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In six chapters Sri Krishna has told Arjuna, "There is no reason to run away. Involve yourself totally, head, heart and soul in the world. It is your dharma, your duty, and your karma."

Relevance to daily life

Sri Krishna did not mean it is only Arjuna's karma, but the karma of every person who is created. Just as in life you inherit death; in the same manner you inherit karmas. Why was he saying this to Arjuna? He said this as Arjuna went into a state of mind similar to that of nervous depression. The cause of nervous depression is the mind. Arjuna had been ready to fight. Why did he decline to fight when he saw the

armies of both sides? It was because they were not strangers, they were people he knew, his own family members, with one side fighting for justice, the other for injustice. He said, “Why cause so much destruction just to have a kingdom?” War was imminent. Arjuna knew that his decision not to fight would not change anything, the war would still take place; however, his identification and attachment to people whom he considered to be his own caused a sudden withdrawal of his mind from the action which was going to be performed. Suddenly his mind recognized, “Hey, I am not going to find joy and peace by performing this action, so why am I doing it?” Then mental lethargy set in.

Lethargy begins to influence the activities of the karmendriyas, the jnanendriyas, the natural expressions and habits of mind in all its aspects, and eventually there is a sensory cut off. Then there is no control over the body and it suddenly becomes weak. One experiences trembling of the knees, lack of balance, one falls down, one cannot hold anything. It has happened to many of us, hasn't it? A split between the mind and action occurs, and suddenly you feel all your energy being drained away and you cannot lift yourself up. When this continues it is recognized as serious nervous depression.

Arjuna as a person was an intimate friend of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna has even said to him, “We both are part of the same reality. You are finite, I am infinite, you are limited to time and space and I am beyond time and space, yet we are both extensions of the same reality, nara and Narayana.” Therefore, when Arjuna is in this debilitating state, Sri Krishna inspires in him the attitude of participating in the karmas of life and not rejecting them. He advocates performing karma as a duty, *kartavya*.

Duty

You breathe to survive, don't you? You know that breath and life are linked. Similarly, the karmas which you receive are linked with your kartavya. You have an obligation towards the

karma so do it, perform it. That is one reality of life. People who see karmas as suffering and people who see karmas as stepping stones to transcendence, to mukti, moksha, samadhi and nirvana, both have to involve themselves in karma.

Life, death, karma, these are three inseparable principles. If you live, it is due to your karma. You cannot ever overcome your karma. Even if you are an avatara, you live because of karma. The day the karmas are exhausted, Hari Om Tat Sat, bye-bye. There is no return, no coming back. While performing the karmas, however, don't associate yourself with your senses, desires, sensuality and cravings. Do not identify your ego with the karma. Be detached, yet continue to perform.

A human being is a combination of head, heart and hands. Hands represent action, karmas represent action. In the first one-third of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna about the importance of utilizing the faculties of the hands. His instruction is to perform the karmas, but to maintain a different awareness. Be detached, realize that karmas are expressions of movement in time; they are not eternal. The pattern of the karmas leaves an impression. Sattwic, rajasic and tamasic karmas leave impressions. With karmas you can't be impression-less. Consequently, if the impressions are going to be there, make them divine. Transform the impressions from the gross, the mundane, the attached and the identified into more transcendental, divine and universal impressions. The lessons of the first six chapters have been on karma, and in the next six they are on *jnana*, wisdom, understanding.

Seventh Discourse:

The Yoga of Wisdom and Realization

Here, the theme of the *Bhagavad Gita* has changed. The shift is from karma to realization of the godly nature existing in every name, form and idea. Now Sri Krishna's emphasis is on changing one's perception, transcending one's self-centred nature and experiencing the existence of the divine spark in all strata of creation.

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥

Now Arjuna, with mind intent on Me, listen to how taking refuge in Me and practising yoga, you will know Me fully and be freed from all doubt. (7:1)

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "If you can think of Me by identifying with Me in yoga, then you will realize that I am the support, the beauty, the auspiciousness, the Self in everything, everywhere." In this chapter he speaks of himself as the all-pervasive nature and of Prakriti as the all-active nature. This has a unique feel of Samkhya. Actually, it is this chapter that should be called *Samkhya Yoga*, as Chapter 2 only indicates the components of intellect and the attainments of sthitaprajna.

Lower and higher Prakriti

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego is
My nature, Prakriti, divided eightfold. (7:4)

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्या प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥

This is the lower Prakriti, but know that different from
this, Arjuna, is My higher Prakriti, the principle of self-
consciousness by which this universe is sustained. (7:5)

Sri Krishna is saying, “In the realm of *Prakriti*, manifest nature, I have two roles: I am the *jivanta Prakriti*, the effulgent Nature that sustains the dimensions of time, space and object, and I am the inert nature, *jada Prakriti*. The entire creation, all the tanmatras, the mahabhootas, the aspects of mind, manas, buddhi, chitta, and ahamkara are aspects or manifestations of the inert Prakriti. Beyond this is the transcendental *jivanta Prakriti*, which sustains the *jada Prakriti*.

Role of the gunas

The entire realm of Prakriti is governed by the three gunas: sattwa, rajas and tamas. The gunas are also the controlling factors in the attitude, thought and behaviour of an individual. As individuals, you express different qualities or *gunas*. Some people try to balance their effect by becoming aware of the positive and the negative, the restrictive and the expansive aspects of the gunas.

You are under the hypnotic effect of the gunas. You see the world as you wish to see it and that is due to the expression of a guna. This state of hypnosis, brought about by the interaction of the gunas, is the force which does not allow you to realize the existence of the *jivanta Prakriti*. Consequently, it is the force of the gunas that has been recognized as *maya*.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

Truly, this wonderful illusion of Mine consisting of the three gunas is difficult to get over; however, those who take refuge in Me alone cross over it. (7:14)

Trigunamaya is the term which denotes the identification of maya as the force behind the expression of the gunas. Sri Krishna states that if you can develop the mind to the extent where you can divert the focus of your attention from maya, the inert dimension, to jivanta Prakriti, then you can see that the godly nature is the directive force. Those people who identify with this godly nature transcend the influences of the gunas; however, there are people whose wisdom has already been clouded by the effects of maya. With an intellect clouded by ignorance or *avidya*, they perform clouded karmas that do not bear proper results. A clouded perception leads to clouded karma.

Sri Krishna says that there are four kinds of people who worship him: artha, jignasu, artharthi and jnani. “An *artha* devotee prays for relief from calamities which have befallen him. A *jignasu* is one who wants to know Me in earnest. An *artharthi* is one who worships Me with a desire or intention for fulfilment in mind, in order to attain something. A *jnani* is one who accepts Me as the reality which I am. It is the jnani who is dear to Me and who can attain Me.”

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥

All these are noble, but the man of wisdom I regard as My very Self, for with the mind steadfast, he is established in Me alone as the supreme goal. (7:18)

Subtle realization in life

The name of this chapter is *Jnana Vijnana Yoga*, as the teachings have been about jnana and vijnana. *Jnana* means knowing; *vijnana* means to look into the subtle tattwa of knowing. Just as you become aware of the inner reality, you are equally aware of the outer; there is no discrepancy in the balance. In this sense it relates to the concepts of jada Prakriti and jivanta Prakriti; in both there is jnana, but jnana is the outcome of vijnana, as vijnana represents a sadhana.

Some people decide, “Let’s practise antar mouna for four months; we have too many thoughts coming up.” Then they say, “All right, enough of antar mouna. Now I feel nice and calm, so let me do trataka.” They will do trataka for a while, and then after three months another thought comes, “It is a holiday time, let’s do *purascharana*.” and they sit down and do the mantra one and a quarter lakh times. This is the kind of person who can pour himself into one thing, but to reach a complete awareness there are many steps and stages. You must know the indications of each stage so you can adopt the right sadhana for the particular circumstances that you face, such as conflicts, anger, greed, attachment and affection.

This chapter is termed *Jnana Vijnana Yoga* as it contains instructions to Arjuna on how to realize the highest self and how to also realize the nature of maya. One lives in the world of maya, the world of senses, mind and mental perceptions. In addition to this, while giving vent to the expressions of the gross mind connected with the realization of maya, one also needs to have an awareness of the highest state of mind, one needs realization or knowledge of the Higher Self, Brahman. The entire manifest and unmanifest creation is the outcome of the fusion, the merging, the union between the two. Everything is contained in maya. Maya is the dynamic expression of the passive consciousness, and the entire realm of maya is governed by the three gunas which constitute maya. Becoming aware of both states, by both participating in maya and by identifying with the Higher Self, one attains the ultimate purpose of life.

Transcending Prakriti

To transcend this Prakriti or maya and fix the mind beyond, you have to set aside or renounce certain involvements and participations. When you are on the stage, you are an actor participating by expressing your sentiments, thoughts and feelings in the play, but once you are off stage you don't continue to identify with the role that you played in the performance. Similarly, in the realm of maya you are under the control of the three gunas and every person is an expression of these three gunas. However, when you leave the realm of maya you establish yourself in higher consciousness, which Sri Krishna refers to as Himself, the real Self. Then one realizes, "I am stable, I am a part of the highest consciousness. I'm no longer the actor, now that I'm not in the play." As you disassociate yourself from the world and fix the mind in the Higher Self, you leave some associations and participations in the realm of Prakriti.

While you are in the realm of Prakriti you encounter certain attributes of Prakriti. One is *avidya*, ignorance, another is the 'I' identify, *ahamkara*, and yet another is *maya*, illusion. Illusion, self-identity and ignorance are attributes of Prakriti, just as the potency which leads one from ignorance to knowledge is also an attribute of Prakriti.

One has to follow the path where one can find the strength to face the events, changes, expressions and experiences in the realm of Prakriti. This is where the theory of karma comes in, the theory of cause and effect. The philosophy of Samkhya states that every potent cause contains within itself a potent effect. While you are in the realm of maya, even if you perform auspicious karmas, can you avoid falling into the recurring traps of *avidya*? You fall, and fall again. Next time be more careful, the fourth time, be super careful. Life is a process of learning this way, is it not?

The experience of attachment, rejection, passion and arrogance comes with *avidya*. Try to free yourself from the states of *raga* and *dvesha*, the state of seeking pleasure and rejecting pain. Try to be equipoised while you are living

in the realm of maya. Let this not only be a thought, let it become part of your life. Devote yourself to realization of the Higher Self, to experiencing and understanding the spiritual dimension in every human being. Understand that the law of karma is cosmic. There is a potent cause and a potent effect, and you are the product. In this way, realize the cosmic nature.



Eighth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahman

When Sri Krishna began talking about the Higher Self, Arjuna became happy and he said, “Thank God, at least now Krishna is not talking about war! If I can delay this subject of war a bit longer so much the better.” However, since Sri Krishna was in a talkative mood, Arjuna decided to probe further. He said to himself, “All right, for the first hour, Krishna has hammered me with karma yoga: do action, do action, do action. Now he has gone on to a different subject: realize, know. Realize what? I can understand that I have a Higher Self and that I don’t have to bother about what I will do here and now, whether I kill people in battle or run away from the battlefield, my Higher Self will always be unaffected. Nevertheless, why is Sri Krishna always speaking of a manifest Higher Self, a higher consciousness that can take on a body? If that Higher Self can manifest in this dimension as a personal realization, in a form or as an object, then what is the actual state of Godhood, that pure omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient nature?”

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥

Krishna, what is that Brahman? What is adhyatma? What is karma? What is called adhibhuta? What is termed adhidaiva? (8:1)

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥

Krishna, what is adhiyajna here and how does it dwell in the body? How are You to be realized at the time of death by those who are self-controlled? (8:2)

He asks a set of seven questions to Sri Krishna and he fires them like arrows, one after another.

Questions on the divine essence

Arjuna says, “Oh Krishna, I am so happy that you are talking about something other than karma. Explain to me, what is *Brahman*, the highest consciousness? What is *adhyatma*, the spiritual dimension which you say is attainable, realizable? What are the auspicious karmas? How do you define what an auspicious karma is and how does one perform them? What is *adhibhuta* and what are the things which come under the jurisdiction of the bhutas? What is *adhidaiva*, the ruler, the governor of the subtle dimensions? Also, what is *adhiyajna*, the effort which one performs to realize the highest? Ultimately, if you are able to answer all these questions, answer one more final thing. How can You be attained?”

Arjuna took a drink of water while he left Sri Krishna thinking, but Sri Krishna was fast. He said, “Okay, it’s game time.”

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥

The Indestructible Supreme is Brahman. One’s own self, the jivatma, is called adhyatma. The offering in sacrifice which causes the genesis and support of beings is called karma. (8:3)

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥

All perishable objects are called adhibhuta. The Purusha is Adhidaiva. Arjuna, in this body, I, Myself, dwelling as the inner witness, am adhiyajna. (8:4)

अंतकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥

He, who at the time of death, meditating on Me alone goes forth leaving the body, attains My being. There is no doubt about this. (8:5)

Brahman

To the first question, what is Brahman, Sri Krishna replied, “*Akshay*, the imperishable, that which does not change, which does not decay, is Brahman.” The word *akshay* comes from the root *kshara* in Sanskrit which means decay, and *akshay* means one which does not decay. Sounds are known as *aksharas*. Language is composed of *aksharas*; they are the sounds which are the essential ingredients of conveying, communicating, knowing and realizing. This is why Chapter 8 is known as *Brahma Akshara Yoga*. Arjuna was asking questions about the nature of Brahman, the nature of reality and the basic answer is that Brahman is the imperishable, the changeless reality. Just as the letters of the alphabet are, in a way, the essence of all communication, of all the relationships that have evolved, so Brahman is the subtle source of everything. Although manifestation is full of relationships and is always changing, its source is the imperishable Brahman.

Understanding that *akshara Brahman* means imperishable consciousness, evolving consciousness, the experience of the supreme reality, whatever it may be, leads into the answer to the second question. There is no decay as each state of transformation leads to the next set of experiences. In this way, consciousness is continuously evolving, expanding and developing. This is the state of consciousness which, in normal language, is known as the super consciousness or realization of Self. When you realize that true nature which

is referred to in the third sutra of Sage Patanjali, *Tada drastuh swarupeavasthanam* (*Yoga Sutras* 1:3), there is stability of mind, personality and nature. By stabilizing the mind, one recognizes the existence of this Higher Self as the omniscient force.

Sri Krishna explains adhyatma in a simple form in Chapter 8. You will also see that it is explained systematically and at length in Chapter 9, and that for different people, different auspicious karmas are suitable in order to help them realize their true divine nature, adhyatma.

Cyclical process of existence

The cyclical process of existence is like night and day, like the bright fortnight and the dark fortnight of the month, and this is discussed in Chapter 8; one truth, the real; one false, the unreal; one auspicious, positive and dynamic; one inauspicious, negative and restrictive. This cyclical process of existence is what you find yourself in, but this is only a manifestation of that highest nature. The essence is the same, and to realize this there has to be practice, sadhana, fixation of mind.

Sri Krishna then answers the third question regarding karma. The word to denote renunciation is *visargah*, meaning to leave the company of, to disassociate, to divert the attention from karmas that create associations in the realm of maya, Prakriti, avidya, the realm of ahamkara. That renunciation is known as karma sannyasa.

Now the fourth question, what is adhibhuta? All objects of life and expressions of life in the period between birth and death, generation and decay, all objects that fall in the category of life in any form whatsoever, composed of any element, in any dimension, are the *adhibutas*. All objects coming within the purview of time, space and existence are known as adhibhutas guided by the nature of bhutas.

The fifth question asked is, who rules the subtle dimensions? *Purusha* is the consciousness residing in the city of the body; it is the consciousness dormant within this body,

within this frame. Therefore, here Purusha is the deity.

Adhiyajna means offering, serving. Therefore, in answer to the sixth question Sri Krishna says, “O best among the mortals, it is Me in my omniscient form who resides in the body and is known as Purusha. Those who are fixed in Me, who finish their span of existence thinking of me, ultimately attain Me.”

What does Sri Krishna mean by saying he is the *adhiyajna*? For instance, ‘business’ is a term. When somebody asks, “What work do you do?” You say, “I am in business.” What image does it convey? The words ‘business’, ‘engineering’ or ‘healing’ have images associated with them. Similarly, the word ‘*adhiyajna*’ has an image associated with it. That image is performance of your karma as a service to humanity and as an offering to divinity, an auspicious act. Therefore, who is the doer, the performer, the one who resides in the body doing all these things? Sri Krishna is identifying himself with that state of mind and being.

“Therefore, Arjuna, listen to this.”

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्ममिवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥

Therefore, at all times, constantly remember Me and fight. With mind and intellect absorbed in Me, you will doubtless come to Me. (8:7)

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥

With the mind not going towards anything else, made steadfast by practising meditation and dwelling on the supreme, resplendent Purusha, O Arjuna, one goes to Him. (8:8)

When Arjuna was firing the questions, Sri Krishna thought to himself, “Arjuna is trying to outwit me by asking difficult questions, but I will answer him, so that in the future people

can think about what I said. Let me just remind him of the place where we are, and what we are here for." All his answers to Arjuna's questions were just one liners. "Imperishable is Brahman; think about it. Knowledge of spirit is known as spiritual realization. Auspicious karmas are those disassociated from the dimension of name, form and object." Like this, he fired off seven rapid, one-line answers.

Arjuna was looking more and more pathetic. He thought, "Again, Krishna has caught on to my trick, and instead of giving me long answers, he's giving me short answers and he gets full marks for it," and Arjuna was feeling a bit dejected.

Sri Krishna said, "Okay, the simplest way is to think of Me all the time. You don't have to renounce your karmas, that is too difficult. You don't have to worry about your spiritual self or the spiritual dimension, about your jivatma or the imperishable self; it would be too difficult. Do whatever you want to do, but just think of Me. However, Arjuna, the story doesn't end here. Get up and fight. Remember where you are, remember what you are here for, but while you fight, let me tell you, you must fight as if you are performing your duty. Surrender your mind and your intellect to Me, don't think. You are acting on the stage, perform as per the script. The script is the law of cosmic karma, governing every form of life, every existence. In this way, go on performing your karmas, go on realizing, go on realizing Me."

Arjuna says, "Here you are talking about some other concept now! I won't bother you about my seven questions to which you gave very short answers, but here you have brought out a new point. You are asking to surrender everything while living in the world, while doing the karmas. How do I develop the attitude of letting go, of surrendering? Once I let go of my hold upon the gross world, what state or what dimension do I achieve? If I am to leave all my connections with the earthly plane, in which plane should I establish myself?"

To that, Sri Krishna says, “Arjuna, you think too much, that is your problem. That is why you have gone into depression.” You know, when people think too much they go into depression, and Sri Krishna caught on to the weakness of Arjuna. He chuckled to himself, “This idiot! He knows we are ready, both armies are waiting to fight, and he is firing off questions about which volumes have been written, expecting me to answer all this now. Time is passing, we have to start, the muhurat is passing, we have to start our battle.”

Nevertheless, he answers Arjuna’s last question.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥
ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥

He who so departs, leaving the body while controlling all the gates of perception, confining the mind in the heart, drawing the prana into the head and, occupied in the practice of yogic concentration, uttering the one syllable Om, the Brahman, and remembering Me, attains the supreme goal. (8:12–13)

“Yes, there is a way to surrender your karmas, and to continuously think of Me. To realize Me you have to be able to close the doors of the senses, change the flow of the senses from the outer to the inner dimension. By renouncing the body, focusing the attention in the heart, placing the pranas at the crown of the head, repeating the mantra Om and thinking of my attributeless nature, you attain the highest dimension.

“There is a sadhana, a process, a sequence for attainment. The sequence is: withdraw yourself, *pratyahara*; focus yourself in the heart, *hridayakasha dharana*; be one-pointed and constant in awareness of Me as the attributeless, all-pervading force, *Om*. If you can do this much at the time of your death, then there is no doubt you will attain Me. What is the dimension where I am?”

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

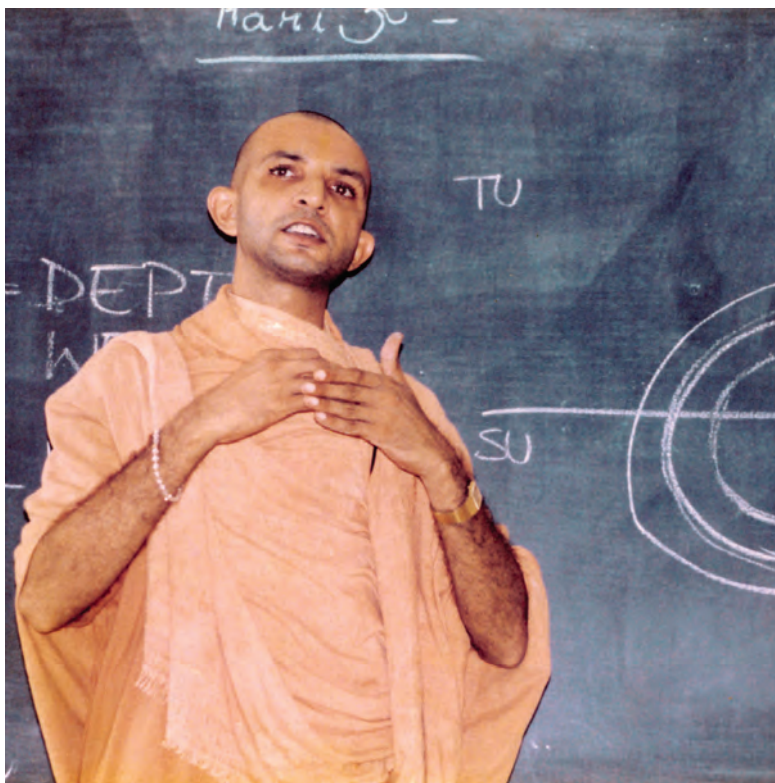
What is spoken of as the Unmanifest, the Indestructible, is also called the Supreme Goal. That is My abode, attaining which man does not return. (8:21)

“Arjuna, understand one thing clearly; life is an evolving process. It is not a static experience where you remain fixed at one point all the way through. It is an evolving, changing experience where everything moves in a cycle. Just as there is day, so there is night. Just as there is the fortnight of the bright moon, there is the fortnight of the dark moon. Just as there is a span of ignorance, there is a span of wisdom. Everything happens in the same frequency and amplitude, all the experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant. The pleasant goes fast as you are identifying with it, the unpleasant goes slowly as you are rebelling against it. Thus, Arjuna, remember that one is going through a cyclical process and the ultimate cyclical process is the day and night of Brahma.”

In one of his lectures, Swami Vivekananda said, “When you are talking to your beloved, an hour seems a short time and when you are doing something unpleasant, a second seems a long time.” Tomorrow, you can have a practical experience of this. Sit on the hot plate where chapatis are baked for five seconds, and those five seconds will be a long time. Talk to your beloved, or to somebody with whom you enjoy gossiping. After talking for one hour you will say, “My God, the hour has gone by so quickly and we only just started, we haven’t come to the main subject yet.”

You know, during the day you are so aware of yourself and your body, of how you look, how you eat, how you talk, how you behave, how you smile and how you get angry! You are aware of all that. At night while sleeping, however, you don’t exist; if you die in sleep, you won’t even know that you have died. It will be a long continuation of sleep.

There are cycles of experience composed of vibrations, *spandan*. On this subject, an authoritative book has been written, *Spandakarika*. It is one of the main treatises of Kashmir Shaivism, explaining the science of vibration, of pulsation, of the cosmic expansion and contraction. Sri Krishna says, "This is the theme which is expressed as the night of Brahma and the day of Brahma, the cycle of creation and dissolution, life and no life. Beyond that is My dimension, where everything is eternal, free from all influences and cycles. Nothing can alter that state. That is My dimension and once you reach there, there is no coming back."



Ninth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Kingly Science and the Kingly Secret

There are various methods available to realize the Higher Self or omniscient force, and they are the catalysts that bring about change in the mental perceptions. Omniscience implies being equally at ease in the past, present and future, being the master, the ruler of the perceptions, thoughts and awareness of the mind. In Chapter 9, Sri Krishna gives a beautiful example to define the state of omniscience. He says,

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥

All of this world is pervaded by Me, in My unmanifest form. All beings exist in Me, really I do not dwell in them. (9:4)

We can explain the state of omniscience by the statement, 'remaining aware of the essence all the time'. Water is an element and water represents an essence. Even if the water becomes ice for some time due to other factors, the essence of ice remains the same as that of water. Similarly, the higher consciousness, in its role as maya, the restrictive, binding force, diverts the awareness of the mind into the senses, into the expressions of personal desires and aspirations, into building up the levels of security. This involvement creates the attachments which become the force binding you to the cycle of birth and death.

In Chapter 8, Sri Krishna described the kind of practice one should do, the kind of discipline one should follow. Practice means a discipline. The personal discipline to realize the Self is fixation of mind, renouncing attachment, thinking of God's omniscient nature and realizing the omniscient nature of the Higher Self.

In Chapter 9, Sri Krishna further states that there are different types of people with different attitudes, therefore there is not one common approach. Different individuals are suited to different approaches.

There are some who are as described in sloka 20:

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥

The knowers of the three Vedas, who drink soma and are purified of all sins, worshipping Me by sacrifices, pray to ascend to heaven. They reach the holy world of the Lord of gods through their good deeds and enjoy divine pleasure in heaven. (9:20)

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥

Having enjoyed the vast heavens they return to the mortal world when their stock of merit is exhausted. Thus resorting to the motivated actions enjoined by the three Vedas and seeking worldly desires, their state is of repeatedly coming and going. (9:21)

Sri Krishna states that there are different categories of sadhakas. Some people desire to attain the Highest Self, to realize a different state of existence where there is no suffering, no pain, just awareness. Then there are people

who perform the prescribed actions as defined in the Vedas. They worship the divine through rituals, wishing to attain *swarga*, a pleasurable state of mind. Such people attain what they aspire to through their actions.

Attainment is the only aim that every human being shares. Sometimes I think that life without attainment would be a hopeless life. There is always a focus towards attainment, whether it is good health or mental pleasure, happiness, security or joy. These are all different forms of attainment and we are all following our path of attainment.

Destiny is nothing but acts of attainment. You move from one thing to the next. Some people enjoy good food and will die happy eating good food; some enjoy art, music, science or service. Different people have different inclinations and as you progress in any particular path there is attainment. However, once you exhaust the *samskaras* and the *pravrittis* which brought about the craving for a particular attainment, then you come back to the world where you have to again work. You are still caught up in that cyclic pattern; aspirants go up, then they come down, they go up, then they come down. Their *vritti*, their *sankalpa shakti*, is not powerful enough to bring about a change which is unshakeably harmonious with the cosmic force.

Then there is another group of people:

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥

Those who worship the gods go to the gods, those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors, those who worship the deities of the elements go to the elements, and those who worship Me come to Me. (9:25)

Sri Krishna says, “Votaries of the *devas* go to the *devas*, to the ancestors go their votaries, to the *bhutas* go the worshippers of the *bhutas*. Also, my votaries come unto Me. I am that which is eternal, know Me as Brahman, that which is eternal. Your own individual self is the *jivatma*, and

realization of jivatma in the spiritual dimension is to know yourself, to know your true nature, the dimension of spirit, the dimension of essence.”

A votary means an associate. Sri Krishna says, “People who are associated with Me, or who perform karmas to attain Me, come to Me.” Also, people who perform karmas, sadhanas or austerities to attain the dimension of the divine being attain that, but once the force of those actions are exhausted, the force of karma brings them back to the mortal world.

You can see it is the focus of mind that is important. The focus of mind has to be directed equally in both directions, externally and internally, so that there is homogeneity of karma with jnana.

Therefore, Sri Krishna again gives an instruction, “Those who wish to attain Me have to learn the art of surrendering. Without knowing the art of surrender, of letting go of your grip, there will always be struggle. The best way to avoid the struggle is that you offer everything to Me.”

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever austerity you practise, do it as an offering unto Me. (9:27)

He has left out nothing, from eating to austerity, all is karma. Whatever you eat to satisfy yourself, be it physical, mental, emotional, good or bad, all is food, *annam*. The meaning, which has been defined by the philosophies, is that the Cosmic Self is nurturing itself by adopting a finite form, *annam*. This *annam* is for the fulfilment of the self in all dimensions, physical, mental, psychic and spiritual. Therefore, think of all your experiences as constituting what you offer to the Divine reality. Whatever you do, do not do it under the influence of the ego, but with the idea, “Thy will

be done'. Think of karma as an environment and not as a burden, so you are taking it in your stride.

Everybody is controlled by their own individual nature and temperament. Who can change another person? Whatever you offer or give in charity, whatever effort you make in life, whatever tapasya you perform, offer it all, as it is only through that offering that you will realize the true nature.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥

Fix your mind on Me, be My devotee, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me, uniting yourself totally in Me, taking Me as the supreme goal, you shall come to Me. (9:34)

Sri Krishna says, "Remember Arjuna, fix your mind in your inner nature, the true Self, worship Me in every aspect of your performance, in every act, every *kriya*, every karma." That is worship; recognition of the essence of the Self in everything. Maintain an attitude of eager reverence, keenness, direct your desire and *iccha*, willpower, towards God, not towards the destructible, transitory samsara. There has to be total, not partial, participation. There has to be fusion of mind with the senses, and fusion between this and atman. It is a state which can be attained by performing *sadhanas*, practices of focusing yourself, recognizing your feelings, observing your actions, expressing your dutiful, auspicious, truthful nature.

The topic of highest identification is known as *Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga*. This wisdom tells you the pattern of rules in the cosmic system which is in every aspect of creation. It is known to few, it is powerful, secret. It cannot be communicated openly; you have to perform the activity to understand it. You have to make an effort to understand it, and that effort is the purushartha, that effort is the kartavya, that effort is the dharma. This is what I am telling you, so that you can cross the ocean of samsara, the cycle of birth

and death. Now you can understand the slokas that begin this chapter.

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥

I shall now declare to you who does not cavil the greatest secret, knowledge combined with experience (knowledge of nirakara and sakara Brahman). Knowing this you will be free of the evil of worldly existence. (9:1)

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥

This knowledge is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret, most holy and excellent, able to be directly experienced, most righteous, very easy to practise and imperishable. (9:2)

In Chapter 9, Sri Krishna has given a systematic definition of different kinds of efforts, *purusharthas*, that one performs utilizing different methods and means. It is a way of life, an ideology, a belief. There is a level where there is identification with that state of existence, with the pleasant, the auspicious, the Divine. You can attain it through force of mind, but karmas bring you back. Then there are people who try to attain the transcendental. Once you achieve the transcendental, there is no return. You move on to the next level of existence, of experience, of knowing, by becoming omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, by recognizing the essence and by not identifying with the world of name, form and idea.

Tenth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Divine Glories

The important point emphasized in Chapter 9 was that surrender is best in whatever you do. What do you surrender? Your whole self. How do you surrender? In everything you do, try and offer it to the Lord as much as you can. Some people say there is a practical problem here and you can see the answer to that problem in Chapter 10.

What to do with your faults?

If there is something really bad about you, how can you surrender it? Why should you surrender it to the Lord you hold in high esteem? Why should you give Him all your rubbish? Surely, you should only give Him your best. The reason for giving Him your rubbish is that even bad things can be accepted as His blessings. There is an understanding behind this view which makes you realize that within you is also the capacity of doing bad. Naturally, you must try to transcend that, as ultimately, there is no distinction between Him and you; that is what the scriptures say, and you have to try to experience it. These two viewpoints are not opposing ideas. They are both valid, of equal importance and complementary, as a devotee, a *bhakta*, always wants to give the best. With that comes the effort to transform, to change the bad into a purposeful good and offer that.

Another nature of the *bhakta* is seeing everything as part of the Highest Self. The entire nature is governed

by the three gunas. If tamas is strongest, then actions are tamasic, and if you suddenly become aware that the actions are tamasic, ask the question “How can I offer this?” What do you do then? You have to change to sattwa! Once sattwa arises, there is a state of natural compatibility in which the aspect of surrender is the final stage. This is surrender of the limiting self-identity, *ahamkara*, and this can only happen when there is realization or awareness of the higher nature. It does not happen at the level of ideas, but as a realization. You begin with an idea, you follow the process associated with the idea and ultimately it becomes what you know, what you realize.

Understand everything is God

Sri Krishna says:

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥

I am the origin of all; from Me everything evolves.
Understanding this, the wise worship Me with full devotion. (10:8)

“Arjuna, I am everything, the state of supreme nature, supreme reality is everything.” The three attributes of the supreme reality are recognized as akshara. In the previous chapter, Sri Krishna was talking of the akshara dimension and akshara Brahma with which one can identify to transcend the body consciousness. Now he is talking about the realization of the highest nature as the ultimate direction of a person’s evolution.

The realization is that energy and consciousness pervade everything, so all different forms and states of manifestation are recognized to be Brahman, the imperishable akshara, having the attributes of *Om*. If something is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, what would that indicate? There is not a millimetre which is devoid of awareness; awareness is present in everything. That consciousness,

that energy, that Brahman is the source of everything: of creation, senses, mind, nature and ego. Therefore, even the experiences related with the senses and the experience of opposites is contained in the all-pervasive presence.

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, “Recognize Me in everything, as everything. I am the cause of coming forth, manifestation. It is within Me, in the state of reality, that everybody is striving to attain fulfilment. People with faith, devotion and wisdom think of Me, are aware of Me, and they are contained in Me.”

How to focus on the Supreme?

Arjuna poses a question, “Krishna, you are right when you say that you are everything. I believe it to be the truth. I see you as the person creating illusions, I see you as the creator, the destroyer and the preserver. At one level, I can understand what you are saying, but at another level, the vastness of the concepts of omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence are difficult to comprehend.

“There are so many attributes. With which attribute can I identify? You say the day is You, night is You; it is a cyclical process coming out of the existing reality. We understand that the supreme nature contains everything, that good and bad fulfil their dharma to give knowledge of opposites. If there was only good in the world, how would you recognize what is bad? If there was only bad in the world, how would you recognize what is good?

“It is the interaction between attributes which makes you later realize something was right or wrong, good or bad. When a thief steals something he is ruled by a certain thought process. After committing the theft, if he regrets it, at that moment he is overcome by a different series of thoughts. Therefore, the purpose of thoughts, desires and vasana is to fulfil a state of experience. Sometimes the experiences will be pleasant and at other times unpleasant. Out of the infinite number of attributes in the entire realm of creation composed of time, space and object, what are the

attributes which can help fix my mind on You? Please explain this in an easy way.”

Sri Krishna says, “There are many ways in which you can think of Me. If you want to focus yourself, you can adopt a different bhava, according to wherever you may wish to direct yourself. If you look at a flower, it has a meaning. Recognize the texture, the softness, fragrance, colour and shape. The more you look at these different aspects of the flower, the more beautiful it seems and you experience a state of compatibility. If, however, you look at something putrid and rotten, the more you look at it, the more you analyze it, the less compatible you feel. Is there identification? Your focus is different.

“As a result, if you are comfortable or compatible with the nature of something, you can identify with it. If you believe in some abstract, non-physical idea and are aware of that level, then recognize that I am the spirit in everyone and everything. Recognize that I am the beginning, the centre and the end of all. You can see Me as the essence, the existence, in all gradations. Otherwise, if you want to know My other nature, I am the dispeller of darkness in the form of the Sun; I am brilliance.

“Arjuna, according to your nature and inclination, fix yourself on the object of your desire. That desire can reflect the ultimate aim which is the discovery of the supreme, transcendental reality, moksha. If you are inclined to identify this transcendental nature with an image of the devas that exist, then know that I am the ruler of them. In fact, I am the ruler of everything. If you identify with your senses and body, then know I am the ruler. I am the essence of the mind; you are simply a medium, an instrument. Therefore, Arjuna, who is the actual enjoyer?”

Satyam

Sri Krishna has said that there is no space on this planet which is devoid of the essence, *satyam*. Then he concludes with:

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥

There is no end to My Divine glories, Arjuna, but this is a brief statement by Me of the particulars of My Divine powers. (10:40)

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥

Whatever being is great, prosperous or powerful, know it to be a manifestation of a spark of My splendour. (10:41)

Really, you see that everything is great, prosperous and powerful. If you dislike somebody, that is powerful, isn't it? If you love somebody, that is powerful. In happiness there is prosperity; in contentment is the experience of greatness. In this way, Arjuna receives the understanding that a person who identifies with the essence of life is the final winner in every respect.

Kartavya, the main aim of the *Bhagavad Gita*

You have to be clear that Sri Krishna is telling Arjuna about the various ideas, components or concepts in the *Bhagavad Gita* only for one purpose, to make Arjuna aware of his duties. However, duty has two forms. Duty or obligation is known in Sanskrit as *kartavya* and it is a combination of two ideas: knowledge and action. Knowledge here represents dharma and action represents karma.

When Arjuna was in a state of depression in the middle of the battlefield, Sri Krishna's only purpose was to make him capable of fighting again. In this context he had given clear instructions to Arjuna, "Look, don't try to take everything upon yourself, as a human being is only one item in the garland of creation. The efforts of a human being are limited to his life only; the aspirations and the desires, the activities, likes and dislikes of each human being are limited to that person only. Nevertheless, there

is a different category of human being, one who lives in knowledge and works for the welfare of humanity with a long-term vision of how to establish dharma so that society can grow. Such a person's actions become beacons for other people."

Sri Krishna has defined two types of people as those involved in the world and those who have transcended the world. The person who is involved in the world just thinks of himself and his immediate family; he seeks pleasure and performs actions desiring the fruit of those actions for himself. He expects good things to come out of such actions done for self-fulfilment. This type of person is known as a *kami*, one who acts under the influence of desires. The other type of person is known as a *nishkami*, one who is beyond the influence of personal desire and has a broader perspective of life and the purpose of life. Sri Krishna emphasized to Arjuna that in order to bring out the best qualities within oneself, one has to go from the *kami* state to the *nishkami* state.

It is like saying that as a *kami*, you are standing at ground level looking at things all around you, and so your vision is limited. As you climb higher, the perspective changes, things that were big when you were standing on the ground seem small. Things that you were caught by initially look insignificant from higher up the mountain. You have similar experiences in your life. When you are confronted by problems they tend to take on important dimensions. When you come out of that problem, ten years later you tend to laugh, "Oh, I was so idiotic to have done that in the past!" The perspective changes, the vision changes, the thoughts change.

Maturity

What Sri Krishna is talking about is maturity of mind. In addition to that, one can understand where one's dharma is and how one can perform the karma associated with it. It is in this context that in Chapter 2 and subsequent

chapters, he had been telling Arjuna about different ways to control the mind and direct the actions. Ultimately, in Chapter 10, he says, “You are part of the cosmic nature; you don’t have a separate existence. It is that cosmic nature, the godly nature, which holds, sustains and nourishes the entire creation and life.”

An action can be called just, unjust, right, wrong, dharmic or adharmic. You tend to become the judge from your perspective, but if you look at the situation from a different perspective there is no need to become the judge, as everyone is simply expressing the gunas inherent in their own nature. The law of creation is such that it allows the positive and negative to manifest but it will not allow the negative to rule; it allows the positive to rule. The negative can be strong, but it is not permanent. The positive can be weak, but ultimately it will rule, it will win, it will dominate.

Sri Krishna sees the negative and the positive, not just in an individual, but in nature also, which is part of the manifest creation. If the negative forces were to win in the end, then it would defy all laws of evolution, of progression and all the laws of divinity. All would agree, as human beings, that God is beyond and represents the sublime, the good. If the higher Consciousness, God-consciousness, is pure, transcendental and divine, and if the aim of everyone is to attain that state, then the negative is only a transitory phase. Therefore, it has been said, *Satya evam jayate* – “Truth alone triumphs.”

Nara and Narayana

After listening to Sri Krishna, Arjuna realized that he, himself, as a person had been acting as per his own whims, wishes and desires, while Sri Krishna as a person represented the other aspect, one established in dharma, righteousness and the higher mind. While Arjuna was representing the state of *nara*, the changeable person, Sri Krishna was representing the state of *Narayana*, the eternal person.

In the previous chapter Sri Krishna had spoken clearly of nara and Narayana, “If, Arjuna, you are nara, the changing principle, then consider Me as Narayana, the unchanging principle. You are caught up in your wishes, desires, motivations, the search for pleasure and happiness which is earthly. In order to seek that earthly happiness you are ready to sacrifice the dharma and allow the unjust and the unrighteous to rule. However, it is not going to work out like that since, as per the law of creation, ultimately it is righteousness, dharma, which will prevail. If you back out now you won’t change history. Five or ten years down the line there will be another war anyway, and everyone will be destroyed and dharma will be established. Right now you have been given the opportunity to perform your duty as a warrior, therefore you have to act, realizing that your action is for the benefit of everyone.”

What you are doing today is not going to affect the cosmic reality, the cosmic dimension. If there is a war between two armies of ants for example, will it destroy human beings? No. The ants are going to destroy themselves. Similarly, in the cosmic scenario, the cosmic activity will carry on. Human beings can destroy themselves, but in infinity, in so many thousand different varieties of creation, what is one earth, or one country? However, since you are here you have to perform your duty. This has been the main teaching of Sri Krishna. Commentators have said that the *Bhagavad Gita* is a philosophical book, but analyzing it in a straightforward, practical manner, you see that Sri Krishna would not be just giving Arjuna a philosophical lecture in the middle of the battlefield. No, he would be telling him, “Okay, get up, get out of your depression, pick up your bow and arrow and start fighting.”

Arjuna is trying hard to understand. In Chapter 10, Sri Krishna says, “Remember, everything that exists in the world which contains energy, brilliance, identity and its own *vibhooti*, glory or attribute, is contained in Me and is part of Me. Everything is contained in My cosmic nature and is

part of My cosmic nature. You don't have to peel the onion layer by layer to know what lies underneath. You only need to realize that it is the cosmic nature which sustains and nourishes the entire creation, and you also, as you are part of creation."

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्ट्भ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥

Arjuna, what will you gain by knowing all this in detail? I stand holding this entire world as one part of Myself. (10:42)



Eleventh Discourse:

The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form

Chapter 11 begins with Arjuna thanking Sri Krishna,

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥

Thanks to the most sweet words of spiritual wisdom that You have spoken to me as an act of kindness, my delusion has gone. (11:1)

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥

I have heard from You in detail about the evolution and destruction of beings, Sri Krishna, and of Your immortal greatness. (11:2)

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥

Lord, You are precisely what You declare Yourself to be, but I long to see Your divine form, O Supreme Purusha. (11:3)

Divine vision

Arjuna is asking for darshan. “My ignorance is finished. I have understood about the generation and dissolution of the

elements which nourish and sustain the manifest creation. I have also heard from You about the eternal glory of the Cosmic Self. I can believe what You are saying to be true, but is it possible to have a glimpse of what You are talking about? Is it possible to have a vision of that cosmic nature, to realize it and to see that everything is contained in it?”

Sri Krishna says, “Yes it is possible, but although you can see a myriad of visible life forms through your physical eyes, you won’t be able to see My cosmic form through the eyes that have been given to you by Prakriti. For such vision you need to have divine eyes.”

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥

Surely, you are not able to see Me with your own eyes;
I give you the divine eye. With this, behold My divine
yoga. (11:8)

Sanjaya, the narrator of the Bhagavad Gita, then begins to describe to his king, Dhritarashtra, the vision given to Arjuna. Sanjaya said:

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥

O king! Having said this, Krishna, the great Lord of
Yoga, revealed His supreme divine form to Arjuna. (11:9)

It is possible to see the cosmic, transcendental Self, but not with the eyes which see and originate from duality. It is only with the eyes attainable through the grace of God and the practices of yoga that you can see the unity of everything; perceive everything merging into one.

Shaktipat and sparsha diksha

Now, up to sloka 8 we had a discussion taking place between two people, but from here on, the vision that was seen by Arjuna is due to the process of *shaktipat*, transfer of energy.

Sri Krishna was the guru, and due to his accomplishment in yoga he was able to transfer his *shakti* or power, to Arjuna. When that transference took place, Arjuna entered the state of ecstasy and could see the entire creation as being contained in the body of Sri Krishna.

Shaktipat is not a difficult achievement. It has happened in modern times, too. When Vivekananda said to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, “Can you show me God?” Ramakrishna said, “Yes”, and through touch transferred his energy into Vivekananda’s body. Vivekananda went into a state of ecstasy where he saw whatever he had to, in order to realize God.

Chapter 11 is full of descriptions of the vision that Arjuna had of Sri Krishna after shaktipat. There is no need to go into the details, but in his guru’s body Arjuna saw everything, including people who were about to fight, different life forms and cosmic manifestations. While he was watching all this he was also asking, “What is it that I’m seeing now?” and Sri Krishna was answering, explaining the vision.

Chapter 11 is known as the chapter of vision, *Vishva Rupa Darshan Yoga*. In yoga, the tradition speaks of different dikshas. The word *diksha* has been associated with initiation, but the literal meaning is to have a different vision, a different perspective. There are different types of dikshas. *Mantra diksha* is initiation through sound, *sparsha diksha* is initiation through touch. Sparsha diksha is the medium of shaktipat. If you see an electrical wire and hear a slight humming sound, you can know electricity is there as you are hearing it vibrating inside the wire. That perception of sound is the extent of your experience at that time, but if you were to touch the wire you would feel a current which would not only be felt in the hands but would affect the entire body. In mantra diksha, you can go to a point through sound where you can hear or realize the vibration which sustains and nourishes the universe. However, yoga says there is then the possibility of even touching it, and through touch you get a different kind of experience.

That kind of transfer of shakti can only take place between a capable guru and a capable disciple. It can't happen with everybody. If the guru is capable and the disciple is not, it can't happen. Even if the disciple is capable and the guru is not, it can't happen. Only if both are capable will it happen. In retrospect, we can say that shaktipat or sparsha diksha was given to Arjuna in order to give him a glimpse of the inherent cosmic nature existing, sustaining and nourishing each and every aspect of life.

Returning to our role

While this was happening, Sri Krishna also said, "In creation, my form is that of time, *kaala*, it is not only life but also death. As *mahakaala*, cosmic time, I consume everything. You have been assigned a role to play; you play it. Since you are playing that role in time, you are also playing that role in space and in the dimension of objects. It is your duty to play that role in the dimension of time, space and object, but remember Arjuna, that I am also the eternal time which consumes everything."

Arjuna is feeling overwhelmed, he calls out, "All right! Now that you have shown me your cosmic form, take away that shakti, that power, and let me see you as a human being again. Let me see you as somebody with whom I can identify as a friend, as a person. I can assure you that now my conflicts have subsided."

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
तदेव मे दर्शय देवरूपं-
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥

I am delighted, having seen what has never been seen before, at the same time my mind is distressed by fear. Show me Your previous form, O God, have mercy, God of gods, Abode of the universe. (11:45)

Arjuna says, “Please show me your human form. Take away this shakti by which you are showing me the cosmic form. When I look at the cosmic form I don’t know with whom to relate as everything is so transitory. Things are happening too fast, my entire life is like a movie running at ten times the normal speed. What is one hundred years in the span of eternity? It is just a quick roll of the reel of the film, so please return my normal vision. Take away this power and let me become normal again. I can assure you that my mind has become more stable and my nature has gone back to its natural state.”

Sri Krishna then says, “All right, I will withdraw the power which I had given to you with My yogic energy. You will again see My normal form.”

Sri Krishna immediately points out, “You have to remember that what you have seen in this cosmic form can be perceived neither through intellect, nor through austerities.” Arjuna is relieved and delighted and he says,

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥

O Krishna, seeing Your gentle human form, I have now become composed and am my normal self again. (11:51)

Sri Krishna tells him,

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥

Neither by the study of the Vedas nor by austerity, nor by charity, nor by ritual can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me. (11:53)

“Neither by performing charitable deeds not even through rituals, but only through devotion will you be able to realize the cosmic nature. Only when you are ready to know Me by getting out of this state of duality, ready to perform all your dutiful actions, *kartavya karma*, detached from the manifest

world and freed of your inherent animosity due to raga and dwesha, will you be able to attain the cosmic nature.”

New vision; new questions

From this point onwards, the depression of Arjuna finishes. He doesn't suffer from depression any more; he is ready to fight, he has come out of his despondency. However, the impression of the vision was so powerful that it created another set of questions in Arjuna's mind. Sri Krishna's initial aim of trying to motivate Arjuna to fight was fulfilled. Arjuna himself said, “I am ready to fight. My mind is stable. I've gone back to my natural state of being. Nevertheless, this experience of cosmic vision has created a whole set of questions which I would like to clear up before we start to fight.”

Sri Krishna answers this new set of questions in Chapters 12 to 18, so you see that the *Bhagavad Gita* is in two parts. Before Chapter 11, it deals with an unsure, uncertain person who doesn't know what dharma or karma is. He is given the realization that he is an actor in the play controlled by Divinity, and that the attainment of Divinity happens with the loss of duality. After Chapter 11, the *Bhagavad Gita* deals with what happens when the loss of duality occurs, and one becomes established in the cosmic consciousness. The questions relating to what nature is, what the purpose is, how one should be, and how one should live, constitute the philosophy and sadhana aspect of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Before we begin Chapter 12, one thing has to be clear. From Chapter 1 to Chapter 11, the understanding and the state of Arjuna's mind evolved around his perceptions of life in terms of company, enjoyment, happiness and pleasure. On the battlefield, when he sees that the outcome of the war will be the loss of all these things which he holds dear, he goes into a state of shock. He realizes that everything we cherish in life: friendship, affection, love, company and guidance, will be lost and so he goes through a mental state of depression. Sri Krishna tries to bring him out of this state

by saying, “No, your thinking is wrong, do your duty.” He tells Arjuna many different ways he can manage his mind and have a correct perspective and understanding of life, to realize the individual being as part of a cosmic being. This message of Sri Krishna culminates when he shows Arjuna his cosmic form through shaktipat.

Real nature of man

Another important aspect to remember is the approach that Sri Krishna adopted in order to tell Arjuna about the individual being and the cosmic being. We know he has compared Arjuna to an individual being, nara, and himself to the Cosmic Being, Narayana. You should not think that Sri Krishna is saying that he is God, which may be the understanding of many people. Rather, you should see the context of Sri Krishna’s teachings. One state of jivatma is involved in the world, identifies with the world in the form of Arjuna and many others. Another state of jivatma, and Krishna is only a name here, has the experience of the cosmic consciousness.

Whenever Sri Krishna says, “Think of Me”, he is not saying “Think of me as a person.” Instead, he is giving himself as an example so one can think of the cosmic being as the ruler, the controller, and identify with that Cosmic Self or cosmic reality, rather than with the reality an individual creates for himself. The state of supreme consciousness is something that has to be realized. The vedic belief is that a person is not only the physical body, but a combination of body, mind and spirit. An ordinary person identifies with body and mind. The realized person identifies with transformation of mind and spirit. This is the only difference between an unrealized being and a realized being.

The unrealized being identifies with body and mind, with the indriyas on the physical dimension, with manas, buddhi, chitta and ahankara on the mental dimension and that is his limitation. The vedic thought is that due to identification with these two dimensions, there is suffering. When one

wants to overcome the nature of suffering, and in order to have the experience of the spirit, one first realizes the nature of the mind and then works with the mind to transform its faculties of manas, buddhi, chitta and ahankara. Once you identify with the spirit you realize that you are, in essence, one and the same as the Cosmic Self. Water in a lake and water in the ocean is the same substance as the raindrop which falls from the sky. The essence is the same. Therefore, realize your essence and transcend the individuality that binds you to the material world.

The transformation of Arjuna

The message of Sri Krishna up to Chapter 11 was this: realizing the essence of the Self, continue to perform your duties, your karmas and your dharma, not blindly but with eyes open. At the end of this phase, when Sri Krishna gives the shaktipat initiation to Arjuna, in one moment Arjuna is able to identify with the Cosmic Self. That one moment of realization destroys delusion, so the depressed, uncertain Arjuna does not exist after Chapter 11. Arjuna acknowledges this in the first sloka of Chapter 11 when he says, “The instructions you have given me so far on managing the mind and self-expression have helped me to overcome my delusion and my misconception. I was identifying with being the doer, the enjoyer, but your words have helped me to realize that I, as an individual being, am neither the doer nor the enjoyer. When I see ‘doing’ as a simple act, and ‘enjoying’ as a simple experience which is the outcome of the act, then I don’t identify emotionally, mentally, or in any way with the performance of action and I don’t suffer. Consequently, my delusion has ended.”

Of course, he has some other queries and so Sri Krishna shows him the Cosmic Form, but in sloka 51, Chapter 11, Arjuna reiterates the same sentiment:

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥

O Krishna, seeing Your gentle human form I have now become composed and am my normal self again. (11:51)

Arjuna definitely went through a big transformation when he confronted or realized the cosmic nature. It shattered all his ideas, beliefs and concepts about the individual person and cosmic consciousness. Then, when he again identified with the world and with Sri Krishna as a person, and saw that he was back firmly grounded on earth, he said, “I have become composed and am my normal self.” After somebody goes through an intense shock and comes out of it, what is their first reaction? “Thank God I am back to normal!” When Arjuna says, “I have become normal”, it is an indication that his previous nature as a warrior is again stabilized and he is ready to do Sri Krishna’s bidding. He is ready to fight, but he says, “Krishna, with my delusion gone and my normal state restored, I have some questions related to the experience you have given me. Would you be willing to answer them?”

Sri Krishna says, “Well, if you feel you need answers then go ahead. After you have had realization of the Cosmic Self, you have seen what is to be seen and what is never seen by anyone, so there are bound to be questions. Fire away!”



Twelfth Discourse:

The Yoga of Devotion

Through shaktipat, Arjuna received the vision of Sri Krishna in his cosmic form and then again perceives him in his natural form. From here the *Bhagavad Gita* takes a different turn. From Chapter 12 until the end it becomes an explanatory discussion in relation to the experiences that Arjuna has had. The guru tells the disciple, “Okay, you ask questions.” The first question Arjuna asks is:

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥

Those devotees who, with their minds fixed in You, worship You thus, and those who worship the imperishable and unmanifest, which of them know yoga best? (12:1)

Arjuna says, “Tell me who is the better qualified devotee or aspirant? Those who make an effort to realize You, the Supreme Self, by following the path of *sakara*, manifest identification, or those who try to have the experience of the Supreme Self by concentrating on the formless being? That is something which I need to be clear about.”

Sakara and nirakara; paths of karma and jnana

Now, you must look at Arjuna’s mind from a different perspective; he is speaking as a person who has seen something, but does not know how to regain that experience.

Regarding the two possible paths, Arjuna thinks, “If I perform my karmas and, surrendering everything to God, identify with rituals and with the image of God which holds close affinity to me, will that take me to the realization of the Self? Or, if I truly think that the world is an unreal illusion, do I even need to identify with an image or with an idea that is self-created? Why do I need to identify with a concept when it is self-created? Why not identify with the unmanifest nature by saying, ‘I am not this’?”

Arjuna’s question follows the pattern that Sri Krishna had created in the previous chapter when he said there are two paths, karma and jnana. The path of karma involves interaction in the world and entails identification with the world. The path of jnana involves understanding the world and entails separating yourself from the world. In Arjuna’s mind, sakara represents the path of karma and nirakara represents the path of jnana. Therefore, he poses this question, “Which is the better path? To whom do you give your sanction? To the one who follows the sakara process, offers everything to you and continues to live life, or to the one who follows the nirakara process, who does not identify with anything and is continuously denying, ‘I am this’ and affirming, ‘I am that, the Higher Self’?”

In response, Sri Krishna says, “Arjuna, you are right to ask this question; however, the two paths simply represent different approaches. Those who identify with sakara and the path of karma, and those who identify with nirakara and the path of jnana are two different types of people. There is no reason why one should be better than the other, they both have equal weight.”

Sakara

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥

I consider those endowed with supreme faith, who are ever united with Me in meditation and who

worship Me with the mind centred on Me, to be the best yogis. (12:2)

Here, Sri Krishna is talking about the sakara followers. He says, “Those people whose minds do not fluctuate, who are constantly thinking of me as the Self by renouncing the play of vrittis, those people who have faith and see me as the Self manifesting in every dimension and aspect of life, are yogis. I believe them to be of highest calibre, as they have realized that nothing in life can be formless. Now, whether you meditate on an image of God, a symbol of consciousness, a yantra, mandala, mantra, on the breath, or the natural process of the body, there is always a focus for the mind. You don’t need a statue to focus your mind, you only need an object. Breath, mantra, bhajan, kirtan or prayer can be used to focus the mind. A symbol of a light, star, sun, moon, or flower can be used to focus the mind. Whatever object you choose, if you have faith, then by following that process of sakara worship, you can attain the Supreme Self. I hold such people in high regard.”

Nirakara

Then he speaks of the nirakara sadhaka.

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥

संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

Truly, those who worship the imperishable, ineffable, unmanifest, all-pervading, unthinkable, unchanging, immovable and the eternal, controlling all the senses, even minded to everyone and rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, also come to Me. (12:3–4)

“How do you adore the unthinkable? Nirakara represents the unmanifest, the eternal, the unthinkable, which exists

beyond the range of intellect. In order to experience that which is transcendental, omniscient and omnipresent, you need to have a different mentality. People who have such a mentality are also dear to me. They attain the Supreme Self as they do not identify with, but rather separate themselves from, personal identification with name, form and idea. Through this process you also attain the Supreme Self.”

When Sri Krishna refers to adoring the unthinkable, the eternal, he is actually inferring that there is a group whose mentality is strong, powerful and not attracted to the world, the dimension of name, form and idea. Mentality is an instrument, a capacity, a quality which you have. According to its quality and capacity you can either identify with the world and see that as a divine expression, or isolate yourself from the world of name, form and idea and merge yourself with the reality which exists beyond these three dimensions. This is important as here Sri Krishna states that people centred in the body, the senses and the mind find it difficult to identify with nirakara.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥

For those whose mind is fixed on the unmanifest, there is greater difficulty; it is a very difficult aim for the embodied. (12:5)

Union with Krishna

Arjuna asks, “Can you explain to me how one can fix oneself in both oneself and the Supreme Consciousness at the same time?”

Sri Krishna answers:

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥

Therefore fix your mind (manas) and intellect (buddhi) in Me alone; thereafter you will live in Me alone, without a doubt. (12:8)

“The process is simple. Fix your mind in the Supreme Consciousness. What is the activity, the role of manas? *Sankalpa* and *vikalpa*, thought and counter thought, movement of thoughts. Instead of allowing the thoughts to identify with sense objects, you channel them to see the divine experience which exists in everything. It doesn't have to be a forceful process; it should be natural and spontaneous. Just as one can think effortlessly about one's enemy or lover, and thoughts continuously, naturally and spontaneously go towards them, similarly one should think of the Cosmic Self naturally and spontaneously, without fighting oneself. This means you begin to identify not with the world of sense objects, but with the transcendental nature.

Arjuna says, “I can understand what you are saying, but it seems difficult. You can identify your enemy or your lover; you know who the enemy is and who your lover is, and thoughts flow naturally. But how can one identify the Transcendental Self?”

Sri Krishna replies, “Contemplate your buddhi, your rationality, your understanding, your expression of that which is good, identify with that. Go through the process of analysis and find out what is good, what helps you to overcome and transform yourself. Find out what is bad, what binds, restricts and limits you and doesn't allow your growth. Then, with application of buddhi, rationality, analysis and your discriminative faculty, fix yourself in the experience of the Higher Self, the Transcendental Being. In that way, establish yourself in the Supreme Consciousness.”

The beloved of Krishna

Then Arjuna asks, “Can you tell me how an aspirant, who has established himself in the Supreme Consciousness, expresses his nature, mentality, feelings and emotions? How do you know who has attained the realization of the higher consciousness?”

In answer to that, Sri Krishna describes the aspirant in nine slokas.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥

He who is free from hatred, is friendly and compassionate towards all beings, is without 'mineness' and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, (12:13)

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

ever content and united with Me, self-controlled, having firm resolve, with mind and intellect surrendered to Me, that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (12:14)

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्ष भयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥

He who is not a source of agitation for the world, nor is agitated by the world, who is free from exhilaration and anger, fear and anxiety, is dear to Me. (12:15)

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

He who is free from wants, pure, clever, impartial and above distractions, who renounces doership in all actions, that devotee is dear to Me. (12:16)

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥

He who neither rejoices nor hates, grieves nor desires, renounces good and evil, and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. (12:17)

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥

He who is the same with foe and friend, in honour and dishonour, the same in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and is free from attachment, (12:18)

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥

To whom praise and reproach are equal, who is silently contemplative, content with anything, unattached to home, steady-minded and full of devotion, that person is dear to Me. (12:19)

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

Truly, those who follow this immortal dharma thus declared, endowed with faith, regarding Me as supreme, those devotees are extremely dear to Me. (12:20)

This is the description of a perfect being, a person who has attained the highest realization of transcendental consciousness, and how that person can act, live and be.

Renunciation

The aspiring Arjuna then poses one more question, “Well, the description you have given is clear and the paths you have described seem very good. I can understand them but they seem to be many. One is the path of practice, another is the path of knowledge, another is the path of renouncing the fruits of action, and still another is the path of meditation. Now, can you tell me which one of the four is most appropriate?”

Sri Krishna replies:

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥

Truly, knowledge is better than practice, meditation is superior to knowledge and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even better than meditation, for from renunciation comes immediate peace. (12:12)

Knowledge is superior to practice, but this doesn't mean you stop practising and become a bookworm. What Sri Krishna is referring to is routine practice without real understanding of the practice. You can practise something mechanically and you can practise something with understanding of the process. As a result, knowledge is superior to practice and meditation is superior to knowledge, as in knowledge there still remains duality and even 'trinality'. Sri Swamiji has described this threefold state by saying that the practitioner is one thing, the aim or object of the practice is another and the process or method of practice which you adopt is the third.

You start your sadhana, your process, with *traita bhava*, with 'trinality', threefold awareness. In practice and in knowledge you have these three things involved. As the meditation deepens, there are two things involved: the aim and you. In meditation, desires remain, they don't finish. Even if your aim is to attain an experience of God, the intensity of that desire can take you so far, but desire still exists. Therefore, the higher state beyond meditation is renunciation of desire. In order to be realized, you have to let go of your desire to be realized. Use it as far as it can go and once you are in the process, leave it. Continue with the process and just be yourself. Just be yourself.

Let go of expectation of the result. Let go of the expectation that, "I am going to reach the goal." Once the trigger is pulled, the bullet goes. It is before pulling the trigger that you have to aim and adjust. After you have pulled the trigger there is no way you can change the course of the bullet; it will go where it was intended to go. Similarly, in meditation you have to set aside the expectation and desire in order to succeed and attain. Renunciation of that desire leads to peace: *Tyagat shantih anantaram* – "In peace there is cessation of duality." In peace there is absence of craving. In peace there is only attainment.

Thirteenth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field

In Chapter 12, Sri Krishna explained to Arjuna the nature of an aspirant who has attained the highest consciousness. Now Arjuna poses a question. “You have said that people find the process of identification with the eternal, the imperishable difficult, as they are associated or fixed in their bodies. They identify with their own senses, emotions, feelings, aspirations, so they have a hard time identifying with the eternal, the indescribable, the nirakara. In that case, what do the experiences of the body actually represent and how can those experiences be altered to eventually realize the cosmic nature?”

The field and the knower of the field

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, “This means I will have to describe to you the theory of Samkhya.”

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥

This body, Arjuna, is called the kshetra, one who knows it is called the kshetrajna by those who know both. (13:1)

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥

Know Me to be the kshetrajna in all kshetras, Arjuna.
The knowledge of kshetra and kshetrajna is considered
by Me to be the true knowledge. (13:2)

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that the body is the *kshetra*, the field, area, dimension. One who knows this field or dimension is known as a *kshetrajna*. You can compare the two to a farm and the farmer. The body is like a farm as when you sow the seed and take care of it, the seed germinates, sprouts and grows into a plant. The nature of the farm, the *kshetra*, is that it will produce whatever is sown in it. The *kshetrajna*, the farmer, is distinct from the farm. It is he who plants the seeds in accordance with the time, season and need, and nourishes the plantation.

When Sri Krishna says the body is like a field, he is not referring to the physical body only, but to the combination of body, mind and spirit. He says that the expressions of the individual are actually the outcome of impressions and *samskaras* that have accumulated over a period of many lifetimes. The farmer is actually the soul, the *jivatma*, which is inherent in every living being and which is part of the Cosmic Self.

This idea has been further emphasized in Chapter 15, where Sri Krishna has said:

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषट्कान्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥

The soul in the body is an eternal portion of Myself; it draws around itself the mind and the five senses which rest in Prakriti. (15:7)

“Spirit is My own extension, spirit is the extension of the Supreme Self. When spirit associates itself with the realm of Prakriti, it does not go alone; it goes with its companions, the greater mind: *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahamkara*.” This means that the impressions accumulated from the past are carried into the future, and it is not only the mind that

goes into the future, but also the expression of the *indriyas*, the senses.

The farmer is actually the soul, the spirit. The seeds, which are known as *samskaras* and *karmas*, are implanted in the *kshetra* of the individual person. As these seeds mature and germinate, they manifest and express different natures, qualities, mentalities and identities. Some people's lives are like roses and some people's lives are like thorns. Some people are good, some are bad by nature, and they remain so until the end of their time as that is the seed that has been planted in the *kshetra*. That is the seed which has been carried over from the past.

One who knows the essence, the real nature of the farm and who realizes the real nature of the farmer is known as a *jnani*, a realized being. Rather than identifying with the body, saying that the body and the personality are ultimate, a *jnani* develops the concept of the body as being a farm and awareness as being the farmer, implying unison of the manifest and spiritual dimension. People who can see the difference between the two are the true knowers, the *jnanis*.

Basic human personality

The individual personality is full of *vikaras*, or evolutes, and is controlled by them. Just as the germination of the seed is not the effect of the seed, though it is the natural outcome of the seed, similarly it is a natural outcome for certain things to mature, germinate and manifest when they come in contact with the fertile ground of the body and personality. The body and individual personality have to be recognized as the fertile ground in which there is interplay between different elements. These elements are summarized by Sri Krishna:

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्चचेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥

The five elements, the ego, intellect, moola Prakriti, ten senses, the one mind and the five objects of the senses. (13:5)

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥

Desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the aggregate of the body, consciousness and firmness, this is the kshetra and its modifications described briefly. (13:6)

The major components of one's personality are the following: the five *mahabhootas*, or elements, of space, air, fire, water and earth; the ego, the intellect, the primordial nature which is instinct, the ten sense organs comprised of five *karmendriyas*, organs of action, and five *jnanendriyas*, organs of perception; the mind and the five *tanmatras*, or essences of the senses, which are sound, touch, form, taste and smell. These items are brought into existence in a natural way by Prakriti as they are evolutes of Prakriti.

Sloka 6 explains that when these items come in contact with the body and personality, then new evolution comes about, new modifications take birth. These are desire, the motivating factor, and aversion, the avoidance factor. There is also pleasure, pain, the physical body, and *chetana*, meaning consciousness in relation to awareness, the faculty of being aware. The last quality listed is *dhriti* or firmness, stability. These things together make up the kshetra, the human manifest dimension. It is the combination and permutation of these things that generates thousands of experiences in life. In the world, all these items exist in each one of you and all of your expressions in life are due to the interaction of these evolutes of Prakriti.

Methods for transcendence

Then Arjuna says, "My God, if this is the picture of the human personality, how can one expect to become free from the attractions, influences and clutches of the body and personality?"

Sri Krishna says, "Well, there are methods of knowing and realizing. The first method is through reflection."

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥

Absence of pride, hypocrisy and violence, forgiveness, straightforwardness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control. (13:7)

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥

Indifference to sense objects, absence of egoism, perception of the pain and the fault inherent in birth, death, old age and disease. (13:8)

Reflect on humility, the absence of pride, *amanitvam*. Pride is an expression of ego, *ahamkara*, which is an evolute of Prakriti. If you want to control ego, then reflect, learn to be humble and unpretentious, don't pretend, just be natural. Don't put on different masks to boost your self-image. Don't identify with the ego and think that you are a particular something, that your prestige is increasing or lessening. Just be in harmony with yourself, be natural. Reflect on how you can remove violence from your nature and cultivate *ahimsa*, non-injury, non-violence. Develop the faculty of *kshanti*, forgiveness. Be upright and straightforward, *arjavam*. Don't dupe yourself, don't dupe anyone; be truthful and be innocent.

Then comes *acharya upasanam*, service to the preceptor. The preceptor is the Higher Self, the one who is teaching you to go through life, not just another embodied teacher, so try to develop a link with your Higher Self and reflect on that. Then reflect on how you can attain *shaucha*, purity of thought, expression and speech. Reflect on how to attain clarity of mind, steadfastness, *sthairyam*; don't fluctuate between right and wrong, attraction and repulsion, your own thoughts and other people's input, but develop a quality where you are clear. Lastly, Sri Krishna says to learn self-control, *atmaavinigraha*.

Sloka 8 says you should try to be free from the attachment to pleasures and the clutches of the ego; try to know the reason for birth, death, old age and sickness. Recognize the evil, the pain that exists in you and try to overcome it by reflecting. Reflection is one method by which you gradually transcend, or overcome the identification with your individual personality.

If you can't think that well, if you find reflection difficult, there is another method. Try to remain equipoised in every situation.

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥

Absence of attachment or identification of oneself with son, wife, home, and so on; constant mental balance on attaining the desirable and the undesirable. (13:9)

Be equipoised, even-minded in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. Don't identify yourself as the doer. Also, don't identify your near and dear ones as your support and help; don't be dependent, as dependency also causes suffering. Learn to stand on your own.

If this is difficult, then follow another method. Know the nature of your environment and live accordingly.

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥

Unswerving devotion to Me by the yoga of non-separation, living in secluded places, absence of pleasure for the company of men. (13:10)

How can you know or realize the nature of your environment and how it affects you, and how the company of people affects you? Some people are guided or motivated towards pleasure, control and manipulation. If you find that those who surround you emphasize these things, get away from there so you are not affected by it. To make sure your mind

is tranquil, find a solitary place where you can reflect. The mind is not strong enough to combat all the influences it receives from the immediate environment. Try to find a place with a pure environment, where the worldly desires and cravings don't pull you towards the gross nature all the time, where there is some purity to allow you to transcend your gross nature and establish yourself in yoga with faith in the Supreme Self.

Nature of the Cosmic Self

After listening to what Sri Krishna says, Arjuna replies, “If we follow the methods you have described, how can we experience the formless, the imperishable, the eternal? How can we identify with the Cosmic Self?” Consequently, in slokas 12–17, Sri Krishna describes the nature of the formless self, the Cosmic Self. When you read these slokas you will recognize the vedic thought here, as Arjuna's question concerns the Supreme Self in its formless, indescribable aspect.

Sri Krishna begins:

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।
अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥

Now I will speak to you about that which has to be known, knowing which one attains immortality; that beginningless supreme Brahman called neither sat, existing, nor asat, not existing. (13:12)

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥

With hands and feet everywhere, with hands, feet and mouth everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the world enveloping everything. (13:13)

The *Purusha Sukta* of the Vedas has the same sentiment that Sri Krishna voices here, that the formless, eternal, Cosmic Self is all-pervasive. It envelops everything, yet it

is not identifiable. It exists everywhere, yet it cannot be seen. It contains everything, yet it is not a container. It sees everything, yet it does not see. It knows everything, yet it is not involved in the process of knowing.

Arjuna says, “What is all this? You are saying the Supreme Self is everywhere, yet is non-existent, that it is being and non-being. Are you saying that the Supreme Self is in me, or am I the result of it?”

Sri Krishna replies:

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्वयनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥

Know Prakriti and Purusha are both beginningless and know that all modifications and gunas are born of Prakriti. (13:19)

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥

Prakriti is said to be the cause of the production of cause and effect, that is, the body and senses; Purusha is said to be the cause of pleasure and pain. (13:20)

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् ।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥

Purusha, seated in Prakriti, the soul seated in the body, experiences the gunas born of Prakriti; attachment to these qualities is the cause of birth in good or evil wombs. (13:21)

Roles of Purusha and Prakriti

Here, Sri Krishna is saying that *Prakriti*, Nature, and *Purusha*, the Self, are beginningless and endless realities. This is the description according to Samkhya. These two exist, and all the qualities, modifications and evolutes are born out of Prakriti. Just as coolness and ice or heat and fire are inseparable, they are two distinct things, similarly, Purusha

and Prakriti are the same yet two different things. Just as ice is the form and coolness is the experience, or fire is the form and heat is the experience, so Prakriti is the form and Purusha is the experience.

Matter and spirit, these are the two eternal realities. They complement each other and they are the cause of creation, preservation and destruction. In the production of cause and effect, in the production of the manifest creation, it is Nature or Prakriti which is the cause. The experiencer of this process is Purusha.

Just as milk is the cause or basis for further modifications of milk such as yoghurt, cheese and butter, similarly, Prakriti is the basis for further expressions, modifications, changes and transformations of life. Just as sugar cane is the cause and juice, crystallized sugar and candies are the effects, Prakriti is the cause and the tanmatras, the body, the senses, their sensations, everything manifest and experienced in this dimension is the outcome of Prakriti. Nature or Prakriti is the cause of *samsara*, the manifest dimension.

Cosmic consciousness is the very essence of whatever exists. If the cosmic consciousness or Purusha separated itself from Prakriti, Prakriti would be pointless. If heat is separated from fire, what is the role of fire? If fluidity is separated from water, motion from air, expansiveness from the sky, what is their role? Likewise with Purusha and Prakriti; if they were separate from each other there would be no life, and as we are dealing with life we have to think of these two as inseparable. In reality, the individual self or spirit within you is nothing but an extension of the Supreme Self.

How to know the Supreme Self?

Some behold the Supreme Self in meditation. Some behold the Supreme Self through jnana yoga. Some behold the Supreme Self through karma yoga.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥

Some behold the Self in the self, by the Self in meditation, others by Samkhya yoga, the path of knowledge, and others by karma yoga. (13:24)

Some people are able to identify with that Supreme Self after isolating themselves from the effects of Prakriti when they internalize themselves in meditation. Some people are able to behold that Self by awakening the faculties of wisdom. Some people are able to perceive and realize the Self by involving themselves in the actions and activities of the world. People who are able to see the existence of the self in the transitory states of life are the people who attain realization of the Cosmic Self, as the Cosmic Self and the individual self are totally joined and fused together. Yet, while they are together they still remain separate.

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥

As the all-pervading akasha is not tainted due to its subtlety, so the Self seated everywhere in the body is not tainted. (13:32)

Here Sri Krishna is again giving an example. *Akasha*, known as ether or space, is a subtle element and its subtleness is not destroyed as it holds or contains the other elements. Similarly, the Cosmic Self is a subtle experience or realization and it is not destroyed as it is holding, enveloping the entire creation. If you look around, you see space. If you look within, you see space. If you look at the structure of an atom, you see the nucleus, protons, electrons, neutrons and other elements in space. It can't be seen with naked eyes, but through the use of instruments you know that there is space between each of the atomic components. You cannot deny the existence of space just because you cannot see it. Another illustration of the quality of the Supreme Self is the sun; just as one sun illuminates the entire solar system and you cannot say that the sun shines only on earth and not on

Jupiter, Venus or Mars, similarly, one spirit illuminates the entire creation.

To summarize the main point of Chapter 13, kshetra means field, and though this has been translated as 'body' here, the body being referred to is not the physical body, but the individual, complete being. The kshetrajna, or the knower of the field, relates to the soul, the immanent aspect of the Supreme Self. The remainder of the discussion relates to Purusha and Prakriti, establishing that every individual is an extension of the Cosmic Self, therefore it is the natural, inherent aim of everyone to discover the source.



Fourteenth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas

Sri Krishna himself had mentioned in Chapter 13 that *Prakriti*, or Nature, is the medium for bringing forth cause and effects, and that *Purusha*, the individual soul, is the medium to experience the pleasure and pain which comes about as the result of cause and effect. It is the individual soul that dwells in *Prakriti* and enjoys the experiences of life which are coloured by the three gunas. Arjuna refers to this in Chapter 14 when he says, “You are talking to me about Yourself and your Maya, about *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, but what about the gunas, the attributes which also play a part in creation? You have simply mentioned the three gunas in passing. Can you describe what they are?”

Role of the gunas

In answer to this, Sri Krishna begins to describe the gunas.

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥

Arjuna, My womb is the great Brahma (known as *Prakriti* or Nature). In that I place the seed; from that comes the birth of all beings. (14:3)

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥

Whatever forms are born from different wombs, this great Brahma is the womb, Arjuna, and I am the seed-giving Father. (14:4)

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

Sattwa, rajas and tamas, these gunas born of Prakriti, firmly bind the imperishable soul to the body, O Arjuna. (14:5)

In these three slokas, Sri Krishna briefly described his role in relation to Prakriti, Prakriti's role in creation, and the gunas as identified and associated with Prakriti. Regarding his relationship with Prakriti, Sri Krishna says that the Supreme Self gives the seed of consciousness in the womb of Nature. The sentient and insentient come together. It is the sentient being, the Supreme Self, who, when united with the insentient Nature, becomes the cause of creation. It is due to this union of Purusha and Prakriti that everything comes into existence.

From this we infer that Prakriti has the potential to germinate the will of the Divine. 'Will' here represents the conscious faculty, and Prakriti is the medium through which each being in creation is endowed with the conscious faculty. It is that consciousness, the knowledge of the self, which makes one recognize oneself as a being. If a body exists without consciousness, it is the same as any other piece of matter even though bones, nerves, etc., exist. It is due to the injection of consciousness that you are able to utilize the faculties of the indriyas, the mind and the ego, and recognize yourself as an independent, individual being.

The consciousness which you are experiencing now is the gross form of the divine, transcendental consciousness. This has been the sentiment of all the scriptures. You can also say that you have conscious, subconscious, unconscious and potentially superconscious dimensions. You can move from one spectrum, one range, into a higher range of consciousness. While you are in *chetan avastha*, the conscious

state, you identify with the individual self, and when you are in *turiya avastha*, the superconscious state, you identify with the Cosmic Self. The body is not responsible for this evolution; it is the consciousness itself which goes through changes and transformations and confirms the existence of the Supreme consciousness. That is the role of Purusha, that is the role of Brahman, that is the role of Shiva in the spectrum of creation.

In sloka 4, Sri Krishna is referring to the role of Prakriti in relation to creation. Prakriti is the mother and from her springs forth all kinds of beings. All the different forms of existence coming out from all the wombs, whether they are small, like insects, or giants, like elephants, or sentient beings, like humans, issue forth from Prakriti. Prakriti endows them with the body and physical sense so that they can live, act, survive and multiply in creation.

In sloka 5 Sri Krishna says that the qualities of sattwa, rajas and tamas are the three gunas which come forth from Prakriti and bind the immortal spirit to this body, the realm of Prakriti. This has been said in other yogic and scriptural texts also. One must transcend the gunas in order to become free, to experience moksha, samadhi, or nirvana and again experience the pure natural spirit.

Sattwa

What then is sattwa?

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥

Of these, sattwa, being stainless, luminous and flawless, binds through self-identification with happiness and wisdom, Arjuna. (14:6)

The nature of sattwa is light and knowledge. It is free from every kind of vikara, which means there are no evolutes of sattwa. This is because sattwa is the pure state which contains both cause and effect. When sattwa is associated with the body, with an individual being, there is an urge to seek the

pleasant, the joyful, and there is an urge to seek knowledge. Therefore, you can say that the predominance of sattwa is responsible for the transformation of consciousness from gross to sublime.

Rajas

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥

Know the nature of rajas to be passion, the source of cupidity and attachment. Arjuna, it binds the embodied one through attachment to action. (14:7)

The nature of rajas is attraction born out of attachment and desire. Also, attachments and desire give birth to rajoguna. The more desires you have, the more you want to fulfil them. You strive to fulfil your desires, you work out methods and ways, but the more you pursue your desires the more attached you become to different sense objects. It has been stated beautifully that rajoguna binds one with action and the fruits of the action. It is a circular process. Rajoguna is responsible for the cycle of desire, action, the result of action and again desire. Greed, self-oriented desires and being disturbed mentally by the desire to seek pleasure are the outcome of rajoguna. It is where you want to feed yourself, receive for yourself; there is no giving, just accumulation for one's self. When your own individual self is the motivating factor for your achievement and attainments, and no one else is considered, at that moment it is rajoguna which is dominant.

Tamas

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥

Know tamas to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings. It binds through carelessness, laziness and sleep, O Arjuna. (14:8)

It is the tamoguna which binds the self to the body by identifying with the body due to ignorance. Engaging in futile activities of the senses, inertia, laziness, withdrawing into one's personal shell and indulging in sleep where the connection with the outside world is cut, are the indications of tamoguna. When you are not able to discriminate between right and wrong, when your motivations do not use the faculty of discrimination, when you make futile efforts to attain something which is outside of your capacity, when your mind is not able to see things rationally and you live in a world of fantasy, then you are in the state of tamoguna.

Three mentalities

You can see that these three gunas bind a person in the embodied form. You should also understand that when you make an effort to awaken the faculty of discrimination, to gain knowledge and live by that knowledge, then at that moment sattwa guna is dominant in your life. When, in the embodied form, sattwa awakens, you attain the higher lokas, you become a *deva*, a self-luminous person. If rajoguna is predominant in your life, and you are able to direct the rajoguna so that it fulfils your aspirations, you attain and maintain the human consciousness. If you allow the tamoguna to become dominant in your life, and you fall into the pit of tamas, you regress into a lower mentality, an animal mentality.

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छंति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥

Those who are established in sattwa go upwards, the rajasic stay in the middle and the tamasic, abiding in the function of the lowest guna, go downwards. (14:18)

Becoming a deva is attainment of the sattvic higher mentality, regressing into an animal form is tamasic mentality, and maintaining the creative human consciousness is rajasic mentality.

When you are sattwic you attain higher states, but the higher state here is self-effulgence, becoming the deva, not the drashta. Being the drashta is far beyond self-effulgence. Becoming a deva, in religious language, is attaining heaven. People with a predominantly rajasic quality remain where they are, in the state of the human being. The devolution of those who are tamasic takes them from the human state to an animal mentality.

A person beyond the gunas

Then Arjuna asks Sri Krishna two questions, “You have given a brief description of the gunas. Can you tell me the qualities of a person who has transcended the three gunas and how does that person act, behave and live? Which method can I use to transcend the three gunas?”

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥

What are the marks of one who has risen above the three gunas, O Lord? What is his conduct and how does he go beyond the three gunas? (14:21)

In answer to this Sri Krishna says,

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥

When light, activity or delusion are present he feels no aversion for them, nor does he long for them when they are absent. (14:22)

When you are able to maintain the state of *drashta*, of witnessing your nature, then you are neither attracted by sattwa, nor repulsed by tamas, nor affected by rajas. The main requisite for transcending the gunas is maintaining the drashta bhava. This sentiment has been expressed in the *Yoga Sutras* as well. It is only when you establish yourself as the seer, the drashta, that you are able to realize your

true being. If you are not the drashta, then you are always influenced by the intensity and dominance of the three gunas. The ability to become the observer is something you must strive for, and it can be attained through meditation.

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥

One who serves Me with unswerving devotion, crossing beyond the three gunas, is eligible to become Brahman. (14:26)

The phrase *avyabhichaarena bhakti yogena* – “with unswerving devotion” has been used here to define the process of transcending the gunas and becoming the drashta. This refers to a meditative process where you are fixed, stable, and there is no fluctuation of mind from one sense object to another. There is no craving or desire; rather, all the activities of sattwa, rajas and tamas have quietened down. You are not being pulled or pushed by them, you are firm, one pointed and stable, and that is the meditative state.

Vyabhichaarena means you go from one object to another, searching for pleasure. Just as a bee moves from flower to flower to collect pollen, similarly, the mind moves from one object to another to derive a sense of fulfilment or satisfaction. Its opposite, *avyabhichaarena*, means being established in one thing.

The words *bhakti yogena* here denote the meditative process in which you have surrendered your ego and desires, and are united in spirit. It is a meditation in which no fluctuations of mind are experienced, where you are able to unite your individual mind with the higher mind. It is a meditation in which your mind is totally isolated from the sense objects, thus allowing you to become the witness of everything that transpires in the realm of the gunas. While witnessing the roles and recognizing the effect of every guna on yourself, you maintain your equanimity. By maintaining harmony you realize the highest Supreme Self.

In answer to Arjuna's question, "How does that person live and act?" Sri Krishna said that a person who is able to transcend the gunas is a *bhakta*, a devotee. You can refer to slokas 13–20 of Chapter 12 on bhakti yoga, which describes a person who is balanced and able to maintain equanimity in life.



Fifteenth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Supreme Spirit

When Sri Krishna was telling Arjuna about Purusha, Prakriti, and the gunas, Arjuna posed a question, “You have said that this entire creation is the result of Prakriti. This implies that there is a dimension under the control of Prakriti and another that is free from the clutches of Prakriti. Can you describe the relationship between the two?”

In answer to this Sri Krishna says:

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥

They speak of the indestructible peepal tree, in the form of creation, with its roots above and branches below. Its leaves are the hymns of the Vedas; he who knows it knows the Vedas. (15:1)

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥

Its branches spread below and above, nourished by the gunas. Its buds are the sense objects and its roots stretch forth originating action in the world of man. (15:2)

Two dimensions: the inverted tree

There are two dimensions. One is the dimension of Prakriti, the other is the dimension of transcendental existence, *param dharma*, and these two dimensions are reflected in each other. You are one, but if you look at your face in the mirror you will see yourself as one here and another in the reflection; similarly, these two dimensions are reflections of one another. In the realm of Prakriti everything grows upwards, indicating the aim to achieve the highest. In the transcendental dimension everything grows downwards, representing the will to manifest. The entire creation is like an inverted tree which has roots up in the transcendental dimension, the trunk growing downwards, with branches, leaves, fruits and flowers coming forth.

The roots, representing the spirit, are contained in God. Although the spirit is with God, creation is taking place at lower levels, represented by the branches coming out from the main trunk. Therefore, from the state of transcendence of spirit, you come into the trunk, which is the actual source of creation, and from the trunk come the branches and leaves. A person who can understand this inverted tree knows the secret of life and the secret of the universe.

The axe of non-attachment

This inverted tree is nourished by the waters of the three *gunas*. The emergence of new leaves and flowers is like the budding of desires. When the three *gunas* water and nourish them, they sprout and each represents one *vishaya*, object of desire. The branches of the tree are spread in all directions and each represents a *yonī*, a life form in creation. A person can be caught in the branches without being able to liberate himself. *Karmanubandhini manushya loke* – he is caught due to the bondage of karmas and attraction to the objects of desire.

This cosmic tree has no beginning or end as the source from which it is coming is eternal. If you want to free yourself from the bondage of karma and the branches of the cosmic tree, then you have to cut down the tree, and it can only be

cut with a sharp instrument like an axe. That axe is non-attachment.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च सम्प्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलम्
असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्नाता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥

Its form is not actually achieved here for it has neither beginning nor resting place. So, cutting down this firmly rooted peepal tree with the strong weapon of non-attachment, one should seek that supreme state; once having reached this state, one never returns, saying, “I seek refuge in that Primeval Purusha from whom this ancient creation has streamed forth.” (15:3–4)

The axe has to be of non-attachment. If you can make sure that you are not attached to the objects of pleasure and can maintain your equanimity, you will be able to cut down the tree in which you are caught and liberate yourself.

The state of liberation

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञे-
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥

The undeluded ones, free from pride and infatuation, victorious over the vice of attachment, dwelling constantly in the Self, whose desires have completely disappeared, freed from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, attain the supreme state. (15:5)

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

Neither does the sun illumine there nor the moon nor fire. Having reached that state they do not return. That is My supreme abode. (15:6)

The state of liberation, the transcendental dimension, is where there is no sun, moon or fire. Here the sun represents prana shakti, the moon represents chitta shakti, and fire represents kriya shakti. That transcendental dimension cannot be known by awakening the pranas, by the faculties of the gross mind, or through any kind of purushartha which you may perform other than developing detachment from the sense objects, the sensory organs, the attachments, attractions, rejections and repulsions in your life.

Why do we forget the spirit?

Then Arjuna says, “At one point, Sri Krishna, you say that the spirit which comes into existence is You, meaning the transcendental Self. If spirit is the source of all strengths and achievements, then how is it that the spirit forgets its nature and gets caught in worldly affairs? I know that I am Arjuna, I have recollections of all my life from my childhood until now. I know who my friends and adversaries are, I am able to discriminate. Why can't the spirit, which is part of me and conscious, remember the source it has come from? Why does it get caught in the net of samsara, in the web of Prakriti? Why can't it free itself from the clutches of Prakriti?”

Sri Krishna answers:

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥

When Ishwara, the spirit, obtains a body and when it leaves it, it takes with it these (five senses and the mind, which abide in Prakriti) like the wind takes a scent from its source. (15:8)

Sri Krishna says, “Yes, it is true that the spirit is an extension of My own Self. Spirit is pure, divine and transcendental, but at the same time when it enters the realm of Prakriti, in order to exist in that realm, it takes the help of the mind and the senses. Here, the mind can be thought of as a subtle sense while the indriyas are the gross senses.

The idea can be understood in this way: in the realm of Prakriti, spirit always moves with the mind and the senses. It is the mind and the senses which colour the awareness of the spirit. For example, you have a flower which gives a beautiful scent. The seat of the scent is in the flower, but when the wind blows, the scent is carried along with it for some distance before losing its intensity. Similarly, in the realm of Prakriti, the manifest dimension, the spirit is aided by the mind and the senses which experience different objects. The experience, or *anubhava*, of these different objects is carried by the mind, the senses and spirit until their intensity is reduced.

Sri Krishna is explaining that the effects of these impressions, the *samskaras* and *karmas* that colour the perspective of the spirit, do not end in this life. As the smell of a flower not only surrounds the flower itself but is carried by the wind for some distance, in a similar way, the *samskaras* and the experiences which have affected the senses and the mind are carried by them as they move with the spirit. Therefore, the spirit cannot know or realize its original true nature while in association with the senses and the mind, as these give the ability to assimilate and enjoy the objects of pleasure and desire in this world.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥

While dwelling in the ear, eye, touch, taste, smell and the mind, It enjoys the objects of the senses. (15:9)

This association of the mind and the senses with the spirit is responsible for forgetting the true nature of spirit.

Therefore, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna to detach himself in order to experience the transcendental reality.

The embodied spirit and the transcendental being

In the world there are two types of *purushas* or beings. One is perishable, and the other is imperishable. In your own individual being there are two experiences. One experience is of the physical body, the physical senses and the mind which associates with the perishable realm of Prakriti. The other experience is that of the spirit which is imperishable.

Beyond these two types of beings is a third, which is transcendental. The first two work together in the realm of Prakriti. The mind and the senses in the body are the perishable aspect of beings, while the jivatma or individual spirit is the imperishable aspect. Apart from these two is the transcendental, eternal Purusha which sustains, nourishes and nurtures the entire existence. You have to make an effort to realize this third type of Purusha, the transcendental being.

When you realize the first aspect, the perishable, you are still subject to birth, death, infirmity and old age. When you identify the second aspect, the imperishable, you realize that it has accumulated impressions over a period of lives. Its samskaras and karmas, when strong, bind you to the realm of Prakriti, the earthly plane. For you to liberate yourself is next to impossible without preparation, without a goal, without a model or guide. However, the transcendental Cosmic Self is realizable.

The transcendental dimension

Sri Krishna describes the transcendental dimension by many different words: it is nourishing, it is spirit, it is this, it is that, but his final statement in relation to the transcendental dimension is that once you attain it, you don't come back. It is a place that is not approachable through any energy or form of prana, symbolized by the sun. It is not approachable by *shashanka*, the moon, which represents the *chitta shakti*,

rationality, knowledge. Even understanding cannot make you realize the nature of the transcendental dimension. Thirdly, it is not approachable through *pavaka*, fire, dynamism, motivation or *purushartha*, effort.

You might remember Sri Swamiji was asked, “Is it possible to become realized?” He said, “No. How can we, through our non-transcendental mind and nature, realize something that is transcendental? How can you wish to contain the entire ocean in a pot?” The indications of the transcendental state can only be descriptions of various experiences, which the mind can have in the process of realization, but once you realize, you cannot express it either through the senses or the mind. When you reach it, that’s it. When you come back, you don’t even remember, it does not return, it can’t be expressed.

Sri Krishna says, “Once you realize the third aspect, the transcendental Purusha, the *uttam purusha*, then there is nothing that binds you to the world and you are free. Therefore Arjuna, those people who seek to realize the essence of the transcendental Self devote themselves to overcoming or transcending the lower selves.”

In conclusion, you will notice that since Chapter 11, Sri Krishna has not once told Arjuna to fight, as now that need has passed. Now he is simply answering the questions which arise after Arjuna glimpsed the Cosmic Form. Thus, there are two distinct lines of thought in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The first is inspiring Arjuna to overcome his despondency. When Arjuna comes out of that, the second theme is to answer the questions Arjuna has after receiving shaktipat.

Sixteenth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Difference between the Divine and the Demonical

Arjuna says to Sri Krishna, “You have described the nature of the cosmos, the manifest world, the roles of Purusha, Prakriti and the gunas. You have also said that there are three types of *purushas* or beings: the mortal, the immortal and the transcendental. Regarding the *purushas* that exist in the manifest world, in how many categories can you classify the mortals?

Sri Krishna replies to Arjuna:

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥

There are two categories of people in the world, divine and demonical. The divine have been described at length; hear from Me about the demonical. (16:6)

These are the two types of nature. The divine represents the final sattvic state, without the combination and permutation of rajas and tamas, just pure sattwa. Demonical means tamasic, without the combination of sattwa and rajas.

People who are established in sattwa attain the highest through their efforts, attitudes, expressions and behaviour in life. People who are demonical and tamasic by nature, whose perceptions and views are restricted, limited and confined, commit various kinds of deeds which can be called sin. Through such sinful acts they regress into the lower,

hellish states of existence where suffering, pain and negative qualities govern the mentality of the individual.

The divine, sattwic nature

The nature of the divine and what one has to do to attain the sattwic state has been explained fully in the previous chapters relating to sattwa. Even in Chapter 16, Sri Krishna gives a summarized description of the people endowed with divine qualities.

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥

Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in jnana and yoga, sattwic charity, sense control, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, tapas and straightforwardness, (16:1)

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं द्वैरचापलम् ॥

Ahimsa, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation of doership, tranquillity, absence of maliciousness, compassion to all, non-attachment when in contact with sense objects, shame for non-righteous acts, restraint from useless actions, (16:2)

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥

Sublime vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred and pride are (the qualities) of one born for the divine state. (16:3)

The demonical tamasic nature

Then he describes the demonical nature which influences people in the world.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥

The demonical do not know what is right activity and right restraint; there is neither purity nor right conduct nor truth in them. (16:7)

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥

They say, “This world is without truth, moral basis and without God – it is brought about by natural union through lust. What else?” (16:8)

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥

Holding this view, these lost souls of little intellect and cruel actions are born like enemies to destroy the world. (16:9)

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिब्रताः ॥

Possessed by insatiable passion, hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding false ideas due to delusion, they act with impure resolves. (16:10)

An entire description of people who are under the influence of tamas continues up to sloka 16. As a part of your own *swadhyaya*, self-study, I would like you to make a list of the characteristics given in slokas 7–16 and truthfully tick what applies to you.

Sri Krishna says that such people give vent to passions, anger and greed. People who are subject to these three qualities fall into a hellish atmosphere. In fact, passion, anger and greed are considered to be the doorways to hell. If you are under the influence of passion, you attain hell. If you are under the influence of anger, you lose your self-control and experience hell. If you are under the influence of greed, which is always associated with individual selfishness, then also you attain hell.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

The triple gates of hell, destructive to the self, are lust, anger and greed; therefore one should throw off these three. (16:21)

Through the forsaking of these three you strive to better yourself, you strive to transcend your restrictive nature, and ultimately you attain the divine state.

Self-knowledge and viveka buddhi

This small and simple chapter contains a description of the natures which affect and influence the mortals who live in the realm of Prakriti. To some extent everyone is greedy, everyone is passionate and everyone is expressing anger. That is the normal nature of mortals, but this is also balanced by *viveka buddhi*, the discriminative intelligence. You know when you are angry, or perhaps later, when you realize that you were angry, lustful or greedy, you feel sorry, you realize that you have not done something right and you feel guilty. In general, these three things are counteracted or balanced by *viveka buddhi*, therefore we are not just talking about the passion, greed or anger that you or any person can experience, but rather when those qualities become the predominant force in life.

That obsessive nature, if it is not under control, can lead you to commit sinful acts. Obsession with anger can lead you to commit murder. Obsession with desire can lead you to commit rape. Obsession with greed can lead you to commit theft and harm others. At such times there is a loss of *viveka buddhi*. When you have committed such an act you have to suffer the consequences, either as a result of your own conscience or due to common law, the consequences have to be faced.

If you can stop beforehand, you will not allow yourself to be obsessed by these expressions. Also, if your discriminative

powers require that you be angry, then that will not lead you to hell. If your viveka buddhi requires you to be obsessive, knowing your limitations and parameters, knowing how far you can go, then even that is not a sinful act. However, if you don't think of anything else but aggression, greed, or passion, and you perform deeds in their wake, then you will suffer and that pain will last your whole lifetime.

Hope for the lost

If you murder somebody due to your anger, it will be with you for your whole life. It is not reversible like eating something and vomiting it out. It is not like other karmas that can be done and then forgotten. It will have such an impact on you that it will shatter your balance and remain with you. If you become a person who develops these qualities as your second nature and anger, passion and greed make you do deeds about which you feel nothing, the outcome is that you become totally isolated. The world rebels against such people. Even God comes down against them.

If you find yourself in such a situation, on the brink of total obsession, then I tell you seriously, find a guru. If you could help yourself then there would be no problem. People who can help themselves don't need a guru. It is only those who can't help themselves who need a guru. Those who can't manage their mind go to a psychiatrist. Those that can't manage their disease go to a doctor. Those who can't manage their construction go to an architect. Those who can't manage their psyche go to a guru. People say, "The guru is within, I do not need a guru." Really? Then think of yourself as the doctor and start operating on yourself! You need a person who can awaken atmabhava and so a guru is needed.

The role of guidance in free will and destiny

Now, Arjuna was pondering over what Sri Krishna had said about the role of Purusha and Prakriti, the role of gunas, and the link that exists between the gross and the

transcendental nature. He thought about the two categories of nature that exist in individuals, the divine and demonic, and this brought up another question. According to what Sri Krishna said previously, Arjuna understood that everything in the world is guided by the gunas; however, this implies everything is predetermined. If everything is predetermined, the right action is predetermined and the wrong action is predetermined. We are all subject to the influences of the gunas, the mind and senses, so what is the use of faith, discipline and effort in one's life?

Sri Krishna answers:

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

He who casts aside the injunctions of the scriptures, acting according to his own desire, attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme goal. (16:23)

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

Therefore let the scriptures be the authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known this, you should act here in accordance with scriptural ordinance. (16:24)

These last two slokas of Chapter 16 also belong to Chapter 17 as they confirm that those who indulge in action out of their own choice and mind are not going to get anywhere. Efforts which come out of mental desires are futile as the mind cannot think straight. The mind is subject to Prakriti, the gunas and different expressions of personality, divine or demonical. If you attempt to follow the mind without disciplining it, it will lead you astray.

There are guidelines in the scriptures on how to deal with and direct the mind. They have been given by people who have attained a glimpse of the transcendental reality, and

who have, through their determination, will and consistent effort, discovered a process where right and wrong are defined in detail. These definitions are not only acceptable socially, but also spiritually. It is by these definitions that the world can progress today. Affection and compassion are qualities which can help one evolve in the social world and they can also help one to evolve in the spiritual world. Hatred, anger and jealousy are qualities that cause downfall in the social world and they also cause downfall in the spiritual world.

The scriptures are the thoughts, experiences and sentiments of people who have walked the path from gross to transcendental, from the worldly to the divine, from manifest to unmanifest. They state how one has to live and how one can improve one's mentality and personality. They define the duty of every individual in relation to existence in the realm of Prakriti, and in relation to one's connection with the transcendental nature. They also define what should not be done, what kind of actions should not be performed under the sway of the gunas which affect human nature.

Sri Krishna's final advice in Chapter 16 is, "Arjuna, although Prakriti, Purusha, the gunas and different natures in people are there, one should still remember that the guidelines to achieve the highest have been expressed in the scriptures. These guidelines have become the eternal beacon, the light to take one across the dark ocean of samsara to the shore of divinity, therefore it is important that one follows the guidelines. In a stormy sea, when all instruments fail and the captain has no idea where to go, it is the distant lighthouse that provides an indication of the right direction; likewise, the guidelines of the scriptures are the lighthouses for the faithful.

Seventeenth Discourse:

The Yoga of the Division of the Threefold Faith

The statements of realized beings are the guidelines which can lead one from ignorance to wisdom, from a restrictive nature to liberation, but one needs to follow these guidelines and disciplines faithfully as they are set forth. In this chapter, Arjuna continues to delve into the question of faith and discipline. Arjuna says, “I can understand what you are saying but another question comes. Can one walk the path just by faith, without following any discipline or guidelines?”

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥

Those who set aside scriptural injunctions and sacrifice with faith, where do they stand, Krishna, in sattwa, rajas or tamas? (17:1)

The question is, are those people who attempt to walk the spiritual path by faith alone, without adhering to any form of discipline, doing the right thing? Is that kind of nature in which faith is predominant and effort nonexistent, sattwic, rajasic or tamasic?

Not surprisingly, Sri Krishna anticipated other questions and so he said, “Look, you are asking me about faith only, nevertheless I will tell you everything in relation to the individual. There is no doubt that everything falls into the category of sattwa, rajas and tamas, so faith is also sattwic,

rajasic and tamasic. Even effort, purushartha, is of these three kinds. Not only that, even the means and lifestyle which you adopt as a sadhaka falls into the three categories.”

Faith

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥

The inherent faith of embodied beings is threefold:
sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. Hear about it from Me. (17:2)

The faith that exists in embodied beings is born of their nature, *swabhavaja*. Faith is not something which you receive from outside or which you can cultivate; rather, it is inherent in everyone. Love is also inherent in everyone. The only thing is, due to your association with the senses and the objects of pleasure which colour your mentality, you are not able to discover your faith and bhakti.

When people ask how they can learn bhakti, Sri Swamiji has said clearly that bhakti is not like hatha yoga or raja yoga, something that you can learn in an ashram. Bhakti is a natural, spontaneous expression of one's life and it already exists within you; you don't have to develop it. Sri Krishna is telling Arjuna the same thing. Faith is born out of one's nature as the result of accumulated experiences, samskaras and karmas. In each lifetime you have a different nature, *swabhava*. In each lifetime, as you gather more impressions and experiences, the new collection is creating a different nature for your next life. Your faith is the result of your accumulated personality blooming in this life.

If you are sattwic, your faith will be sattwic. If you are tamasic, your faith will be tamasic. If your nature, your personality, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviour are rajasic, your faith will be rajasic.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥

The faith of each accords with his nature. Faith constitutes the very being of man, as a man's faith is, so is he. (17:3)

I think this sloka explains everything; faith is what you feel inside, and the entire being survives on faith. Faith is not linked to a religious concept, belief or dogma. Faith is what nurtures the personality. Faith is what connects you, the individual being, with the higher being. It is the link, the connection, and each person expresses that faith, and is that faith in their life.

Sattwic, rajasic and tamasic faith

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥

Sattwic people worship the gods, the rajasic worship the spirits guarding wealth and power, and the tamasic worship ghosts. (17:4)

People who are endowed with sattwic faith don't identify with the lower levels of existence or life, or with nature spirits. In their mind they only have one idea, "How can I attain the highest?" Therefore Sri Krishna says that worship of the gods is performed by the sattwic person. Their inherent faith, due to the accumulation of positive karmas and samskaras, makes them seek union with the highest nature.

People who are rajasic seek dominance, power, position and control, they are manipulative. Such people are endowed with faith, but it also is rajasic in nature and therefore they take refuge in rajasic spirits to assist them in attaining their desires. Similarly, people endowed with tamasic faith are going to take recourse to the lower forms of nature spirits to help them attain their goal.

In people's lives and in your own, when one guna is predominant, thoughts often come such as, "Oh, I wish I had that power." To attain that siddhi, people perform sadhanas that invoke the lower category of forces or link them with the

intermediate category of forces. Some people also perform sadhana for siddhis that involve connecting with the higher forces; however, those who connect with the higher forces eventually lose the desire to attain siddhis and become self-disciplined.

Integration of lifestyle

Arjuna says to Sri Krishna, “I can understand that effort and faith go hand in hand, so faith alone cannot provide the means of achieving the final goal; there has to be an effort, there has to be discipline. You mentioned that other aspects of life are also governed by the gunas. What are those aspects?”

Sri Krishna says, “Arjuna, first you asked about faith and effort, *shraddha* and *purushartha*. You have understood that faith and effort go hand in hand. Now, if you want to cultivate the highest kind of faith, there are other aspects of your life that influence your nature so you need to know about them.”

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तप्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥

The food which is dear to all is of three kinds, as is sacrifice, austerity and charitable giving. Hear about their distinctions. (17:7)

Sri Krishna continues, “Your food, your worship or religious sacrifice and rituals, your religious concepts and the precepts by which you live in the world also affect your mentality. They can make it tamasic, rajasic or sattwic. Your austerities, charitable acts and determined efforts to attain something in life also affect your personality and determine whether you are tamasic, rajasic or sattwic. Before you ask any more questions, let me explain to you the whole thing.”

Sattwic, rajasic and tamasic food

Sri Krishna starts with diet, and what he has said about diet is the gist of the entire Ayurveda.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

सस्याः सिन्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥

Foods, which increase longevity, sattwa, strength, health, happiness and delight, which are juicy, oily, nourishing and agreeable, are dear to sattwic people. (17:8)

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरुक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥

Foods that are bitter, sour, salty, excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning, giving rise to pain, grief and illness are liked by the rajasic. (17:9)

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥

Food that is stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, left over and impure is dear to the tamasic. (17:10)

Sattwic, rajasic and tamasic sacrifice

Your worship, your sacrifice, rituals, religious ideas, dogmas and the concepts which you follow in life also fall in three categories.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥

Sacrifice done without desire for reward as enjoined by scriptural ordinance, and with firm faith that it is a duty and should be done, is sattwic. (17:11)

The important thing is to not hanker or wish for the result. Most of the time you have desires. When you pray, “God grant me this”, you are expecting a result and that is not sattwic prayer. Therefore, think about whether this sattwa nature has played an important role in your sadhana.

He also describes rajasic and tamasic forms of sacrifice.

अभिसन्धाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥

Arjuna, know that sacrifice which is offered seeking a reward and for ostentation is rajasic. (17:12)

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥

Sacrifice done without scriptural sanction, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantras, gifts and faith is declared tamasic. (17:13)

Sattwic austerity

Then Sri Krishna describes austerities or efforts generously in four slokas.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥

Worship of the gods, the twice-born, gurus and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, brahmacharya and ahimsa are called austerity of the body. (17:14)

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितमं च यत् ।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

Inoffensive, truthful, agreeable speech and studying sacred texts are called the austerity of speech. (17:15)

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥

Mental cheerfulness, amiability, silence, self-control and purity of heart, this is called austerity of the mind. (17:16)

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥

This threefold austerity, performed with supreme faith by steadfast people who have no desire for fruit, is said to be sattwic. (17:17)

Austerity is effort which you perform to transform your entire being. The austerities which have been referred to as being of the body are purity, simplicity, non-violence, celibacy and respect for God, elders and gurus. These are known as the sensory or physical tapas, physical austerity.

The second form of austerity is of *vani*, literally translated as speech; however, it is actually an expression of your personality, mind, attitude and behaviour. One who is not disturbed, whose language is beneficial, truthful and pleasant has attained the austerity of speech.

The third austerity is of the mind: contentment, tranquillity, thoughtfulness, control of the mental vrittis and purity of the expressions of the antahkarana: manas, buddhi, chitta and ahankara, are the mental austerities.

Rajasic and tamasic austerity

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥

Austerity performed with the aim of gaining respect, honour and worship with ostentation is said to be rajasic, unstable and transitory in effect. (17:18)

When you want to attain something for momentary gain and you wish other people to recognize you as an elevated being, you perform a drama. It doesn't really have a meaning as there is no change in your nature, there is no change of your inner expression, and instead it feeds your personal ego; that is rajasic effort.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

Austerity done due to deluded understanding, with self-torture or for the purpose of destroying another is called tamasic. (17:19)

Some people want to perfect themselves in the art of black magic in order to hurt or destroy others with the attitude,

“I will show that person who is more powerful!” You are destroying another being, another life force out of your arrogance and ignorance. That is tamasic austerity.

Sattwic giving

In this way, Chapter 17 defines different forms of actions and mentalities that you experience in your life and which give an indication of your nature. It also describes the art of giving.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥

That gift which is given to one who does nothing in return, as a duty, with proper regard to place, time and the recipient, is said to be sattwic. (17:20)

I will tell you a story about the sattwic form of charity. When I was in Rikhia, there were some phone calls from a person living in town. He said to Swami Satsangi, “You know, one person to whom you gave a cow has sold the cow for many thousands of rupees. I think you should speak to that person and tell him that what he did was wrong.” I was listening to this conversation and asked Swami Satsangi, “Do you get many such phone calls?” She said, “Yes, practically every month somebody calls and says, ‘You know the rickshaw you gave to that person? He has sold it in the market; he has done a wrong thing. Even the three-wheeler which you have given to such and such person has been sold for so many thousands of rupees.’”

Afterwards I asked Sri Swamiji, “When people make phone calls like this, what happens?” He said, “What happens? Nothing happens. I gave as they had a need. To help them was my duty, how they use it is not my problem. If I want people to keep track of every cow, bull, calf, rickshaw or anything else that has been given, what is the use of such an attitude? That man might have felt he needed the money more than the rickshaw. He might have needed money for

an operation, and therefore he sold the rickshaw. So what? Another person might have felt that he needed to send his son for higher education, so he sold the three-wheeler, so what? After all he is being helped. I don't think we have to even bother listening to such phone calls."

Of course, the person who had phoned continues to phone. Swami Satsangi keeps on telling him, "It may be what he needs. We are not giving money; we gave him a rickshaw. If he feels that by selling the rickshaw he can get the 5,000 or 10,000 rupees that he needs, then he is justified in selling it."

That is sattvic charity, where you give and there is no expectation. Whether people misuse it or use it, they act according to their nature and need. Nevertheless, don't stop your swabhava.

One scorpion was drowning in the river where a sannyyasin was bathing. Suddenly, the sannyyasin had a fit of compassion. He looked around for something to pick up the scorpion with and could not find anything and being the type of person he was, he simply lifted the scorpion with his hand and began taking it to the shore. The scorpion stung him, his hand jerked and it again fell into the water. His hand was hurting and another sannyyasin was on the shore saying, "What are you doing there? Why are you picking up the scorpion?"

He again picked it up and was bringing it to shore. The scorpion stung him again and again it fell. The other sannyyasin said, "I am going to inform Swamiji that you are doing such things." Three more times it happened, yet each time he was bringing the scorpion closer and closer to the shore. Finally, he put the scorpion on the shore and then, of course the doctors had a hard time trying to bandage his hands. You know what happens with these scorpions. The sannyyasin said, "Look, since I have taken sannyyasa, I've been feeling very compassionate. That life form was drowning. I felt it was my duty to pick it up. It is the nature of a scorpion to sting. It followed its nature, but just because it follows its nature, I don't have to reject my nature of helping others."

Rajasic and tamasic giving

Now we consider rajas.

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥

The gift given with the aim of getting something in return, looking for its fruit, or given grudgingly, is said to be rajasic. (17:21)

The world is full of givers. I remember in the early days of the ashram when we had no money, not even for food, and no accommodations. We used to go out for collecting funds. People used to say, “Look I will give you money, I only have one request. On the room that you construct with it, put a marble plaque saying that the funds for the construction of this room have been donated by me so the whole world will come to know I have done a good deed.” That kind of attitude even exists today. The gift is not given freely and it is given with a motive, with the expectation, “I will be recognized.” That kind of gift or charitable act is rajasic.

There is also tamasic charity.

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

The gift given at the wrong place and time, without respect or insultingly, to undeserving persons, is said to be tamasic. (17:22)

Some of our associates, after seeing Sri Swamiji’s distribution of blankets and clothes to 10,000 families, decided, “Okay, in our area also we will distribute.” As a result, they took 100 blankets, put them in a jeep and went off to a village. I won’t tell you their names; I’ll just call them Humpty Dumpty. Of course it was an unannounced visit. They had not even surveyed whether these people needed their gifts or not. They went to the village square, took a megaphone and started saying, “Come and collect your blanket.”

Naturally, as soon as people heard this they ran towards the jeep and what followed was not an orderly distribution; it was an ‘Anyone who can grab should grab’ situation. Eventually, these two Humpty Dumpty’s became frightened by the crowd as they only had 100 blankets and the crowd was about 1,000 people. They started the jeep and took off full speed. The crowd was chasing them and in order to get rid of the crowd they started throwing blankets from the jeep. When we heard about this, we really had a big laugh, but that act reminds me now of this statement: no consideration of place, no consideration of time, no consideration of need, just with the idea of doing a good deed, trying to do something and failing at it. That is tamasic.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Arjuna asks, “What is the meaning of *Om*?” Sri Krishna replies, “*Om* is one of the names of God, or higher consciousness. *Tat* is another name of that higher consciousness and *Sat* is another name of that higher consciousness: *Om Tat Sat*. *Tat* means that which pervades the entire creation and is contained in everything. *Sat* means the truth which continues to exist and can never be shadowed, blocked or hidden. Truth is permanent and untruth is impermanent. Truth is always what has existed, what exists and will continue to exist in the future. Falsity is something that changes from moment to moment. *Om* is the benevolent power of life.

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुराः ॥

Om Tat Sat: this has been declared to be the triple designation of Brahman. By that were created formerly the Brahmanas, the Vedas and the sacrifices. (17:23)

When Sri Swamiji came to Munger in 1963, the mantra of the yoga movement became *Hari Om Tat Sat*, indicating a link and connection with the higher Self.

Eighteenth Discourse:

The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation

अर्जुन उवाच
सन्न्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥

Arjuna said:

I desire to know severally, O mighty-armed, the essence or truth of renunciation, O Hrishikesha, as also of abandonment, O slayer of Kesi! (18:1)

श्रीभगवानुवाच
काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं सन्न्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

The sages understand sannyasa to be the renunciation of action with desire; the wise declare the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as tyaga. (18:2)

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥

Some philosophers declare that all actions should be abandoned as an evil, while others declare that acts of gift, sacrifice and austerity should not be relinquished. (18:3)

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः सम्प्रकीर्तितः ॥

Hear from Me the conclusion or the final truth about this abandonment, O best of the Bharatas; abandonment, verily, O best of men, has been declared to be of three kinds. (18:4)

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed; sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise. (18:5)

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गत्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥

But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the desire for rewards, O Arjuna! This is My certain and best conviction. (18:6)

नियतस्य तु सन्न्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥

Verily, the renunciation of obligatory action is improper; the abandonment of the same from delusion is declared to be tamasic. (18:7)

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥

He who abandons action on account of the fear of bodily trouble (because it is painful), does not obtain the merit of renunciation by doing such rajasic renunciation. (18:8)

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।
सङ्ग त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥

Whatever obligatory action is done, O Arjuna, merely because it ought to be done, abandoning attachment and also the desire for reward, that renunciation is regarded as sattwic. (18:9)

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥

The man of renunciation, pervaded by purity, intelligent and with his doubts cut asunder, does not hate a disagreeable work nor is he attached to an agreeable one. (18:10)

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥

It is not possible for an embodied being to abandon actions entirely; but he who relinquishes the rewards of actions is called a man of renunciation. (18:11)

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु सन्न्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥

The threefold fruit of action: evil, good and mixed, accrues after death to the non-abandoners, but never to the abandoners. (18:12)

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
साङ्ख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥

Learn from Me, O mighty-armed Arjuna, these five causes, as declared in the Samkhya system for the accomplishment of all actions! (18:13)

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥

The body, the doer, the various senses, the different functions of various sorts, and the presiding deity, also, the fifth. (18:14)

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥

Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech and mind, whether right or the reverse, these five are its causes. (18:15)

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥

Now, such being the case, he who, owing to untrained understanding, looks upon his Self, which is isolated, as the agent, he of perverted intelligence, sees not. (18:16)

यस्य नाहङ्कृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकात्र हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥

He who is ever free from the egoistic notion, whose intelligence is not tainted by (good or evil), though he slays these people, he slays not, nor is he bound (by the action). (18:17)

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसङ्ग्रहः ॥

Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the agent form the threefold basis of action. (18:18)

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गुणसङ्ख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥

Knowledge, action and the actor are declared in the science of the gunas (the Samkhya philosophy) to be of three kinds only, according to the distinction of the gunas. Hear them also duly. (18:19)

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥

That by which one sees the one indestructible Reality in all beings, not separate in all the separate beings, know you that knowledge to be sattwic. (18:20)

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥

But that knowledge which sees in all beings various entities of distinct kinds as different from one another, know you that knowledge to be rajasic. (18:21)

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

But that which clings to one single effect as if it were the whole, without reason, without foundation in truth, and trivial, that is declared to be tamasic. (18:22)

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥

An action which is ordained, which is free from attachment, which is done without love or hatred by one who is not desirous of any reward, that action is declared to be sattwic. (18:23)

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहङ्कारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥

But that action which is done by one longing for the fulfilment of desires or gain, with egoism or with much effort, that is declared to be rajasic. (18:24)

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥

That action which is undertaken from delusion, without regard to the consequences of loss, injury and (one's own) ability, that is declared to be tamasic. (18:25)

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥

He who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with firmness and enthusiasm and unaffected by success or failure, is called sattwic. (18:26)

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥

Passionate, desiring to obtain the rewards of actions, cruel, greedy, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, such an agent is said to be rajasic. (18:27)

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठोऽनैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥

Unsteady, dejected, unbending, cheating, malicious, vulgar, lazy and procrastinating: such an agent is called tamasic. (18:28)

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥

Hear you the threefold division of the intellect and firmness according to the gunas, as I declare them fully and distinctly, O Arjuna! (18:29)

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥

That which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that intellect is sattwic, O Arjuna! (18:30)

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥

That by which one incorrectly understands dharma and adharma, and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, that intellect, O Arjuna, is rajasic. (18:31)

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥

That which, enveloped in darkness, views adharma as dharma and all things perverted, that intellect, O Arjuna, is called tamasic. (18:32)

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥

The unwavering firmness by which, through yoga, the functions of the mind, the life force and the senses are restrained, that firmness, O Arjuna, is sattwic. (18:33)

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥

But that firmness, O Arjuna, by which, on account of attachment and desire for reward, one holds fast to dharma, enjoyment of pleasures and earning of wealth, that firmness, O Arjuna, is rajasic. (18:34)

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥

That by which a stupid man does not abandon sleep, fear, grief, despair and also conceit, that firmness, O Arjuna, is tamasic. (18:35)

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥

Now hear from Me, O Arjuna, of the threefold pleasure, in which one rejoices by practice and surely comes to the end of pain. (18:36)

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥

That which is like poison at first but in the end like nectar, that pleasure is declared to be sattwic, born of the purity of one's own mind due to self-realization. (18:37)

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥

That pleasure which arises from the contact of the sense organs with the objects, which is at first like nectar and in the end like poison, that is declared to be rajasic. (18:38)

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

That pleasure which at first and in the sequel is delusive of the self, arising from sleep, indolence and heedlessness, such a pleasure is declared to be tamasic. (18:39)

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥

There is no being on earth or again in heaven among the gods that is liberated from the three qualities born of Nature. (18:40)

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परन्तप ।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥

Of brahmins, kshatriyas and vaishyas, as also the shudras, O Arjuna, the duties are distributed according to the qualities born of their own nature. (18:41)

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness and also uprightness, knowledge, realization and belief in God are the duties of the Brahmins (priestly class), born of (their own) nature. (18:42)

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

Prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity and also not fleeing from battle, generosity and lordliness are the

duties of kshatriyas (warrior class), born of (their own) nature. (18:43)

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥

Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the vaishya (merchant class), born of (their own) nature; and action consisting of service is the duty of the shudra (servant class), born of (their own) nature. (18:44)

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥

Each man, devoted to his own duty, attains perfection. How he attains perfection while being engaged in his own duty, hear now. (18:45)

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

He from whom all the beings have evolved and by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, man attains perfection. (18:46)

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

Better is one's own duty (though) destitute of merits, than the duty of another well performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin. (18:47)

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥

One should not abandon, O Arjuna, the duty to which one is born, though faulty; for all undertakings are enveloped by evil, as fire by smoke. (18:48)

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां सन्न्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his self, from whom desire has fled, he by renunciation attains the supreme state of freedom from action. (18:49)

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥

Learn from Me in brief, O Arjuna, how he who has attained perfection reaches Brahman, that supreme state of knowledge. (18:50)

बुद्ध्या विशुद्ध्या युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥

Endowed with a pure intellect, controlling the self by firmness, relinquishing sound and other objects and abandoning both hatred and attraction, (18:51)

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥

Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, with speech, body and mind subdued, always engaged in concentration and meditation, taking refuge in dispassion, (18:52)

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥

Having abandoned egoism, strength, arrogance, anger, desire, and covetousness, free from the notion of 'mine' and peaceful, he is fit for becoming Brahman. (18:53)

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥

Becoming Brahman, serene in the Self, he neither grieves nor desires; the same to all beings, he attains supreme devotion unto Me. (18:54)

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

By devotion he knows Me in truth, what and who I am;
and knowing Me in truth, he forthwith enters into the
Supreme. (18:55)

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः ।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥

Doing all actions always, taking refuge in Me, by My
Grace he obtains the eternal, indestructible state or
abode. (18:56)

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥

Mentally renouncing all actions in Me, having Me as
the highest goal, resorting to the yoga of discrimination
do you ever fix your mind on Me. (18:57)

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥

Fixing your mind on Me, you shall by My Grace overcome
all obstacles; but if from egoism you will not hear Me,
you shall perish. (18:58)

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥

If, filled with egoism, you think, 'I will not fight', vain
is this, your resolve; Nature will compel you. (18:59)

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥

O Arjuna, bound by your own karma born of your own
nature, that which from delusion you wish not to do,
even that you shall do helplessly. (18:60)

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve as if mounted on a machine. (18:61)

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

Fly unto Him for refuge with all your being, O Arjuna! By His Grace you shall obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode. (18:62)

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥

Thus has wisdom more secret than secrecy itself been declared unto you by Me; having reflected over it fully, then act you as you wish. (18:63)

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु से परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥

Hear again My supreme word, most secret of all; because you are dearly beloved of Me, I will tell you what is good. (18:64)

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me. You shall come even to Me; truly do I promise unto you, (for) you are dear to Me. (18:65)

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate you from all sins; grieve not. (18:66)

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥

This is never to be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerities, to one who is not devoted, nor to one who does not render service, nor who does not desire to listen, nor to one who cavils at Me. (18:67)

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥

He who with supreme devotion to Me will teach this supreme secret to My devotees, shall doubtless come to Me. (18:68)

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥

Nor is there any among men who does dearer service to Me, nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me than he. (18:69)

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥

And he who will study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall have been worshipped by the sacrifice of wisdom; such is My conviction. (18:70)

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥

The man also who hears this, full of faith and free from malice, he, too, liberated, shall attain to the happy worlds of those of righteous deeds. (18:71)

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥

Has this been heard, O Arjuna, with one-pointed mind?
Has the delusion of your ignorance been fully destroyed,
O Dhananjaya? (18:72)

अर्जुन उवाच
नष्टो मोहः स्मिर्तिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥

Arjuna said:
Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained my memory
(knowledge) through your grace, O Krishna! I am firm;
my doubts are gone. I will act according to your word.
(18:73)

संजय उवाच
इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥

Sanjaya said:
Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between
Krishna and the high-souled Arjuna, which causes the
hair to stand on end. (18:74)

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम् ।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥

Through the grace of Vyasa I have heard this supreme
and most secret yoga directly from Krishna, the Lord
of Yoga Himself declaring it. (18:75)

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

O King, remembering this wonderful and holy dialogue
between Krishna and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.
(18:76)

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
विस्मयो मे महान् राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥

And remembering again and again also that most wonderful form of Hari, great is my wonder, O King! And I rejoice again and again! (18:77)

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever there is Arjuna, the archer, there is prosperity, happiness, victory and firm policy; such is my conviction. (18:78)

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे मोक्षसन्नयासयोगो नामाष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious *Bhagavad Gita*, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eighteenth discourse entitled: 'The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation'.

हरिः ॐ

Hari Om



Glossary

- Arjavam** – straightforwardness, being truthful and innocent
Atmavinigraha – self-control
Abhyasa – constancy in practising
Acharya upasanam – service to the preceptor
Adhibhuta – perishable objects
Adhidaiva – the ruler, the governor of the subtle dimensions
Adhiyajna – the effort which one makes to realize the highest
Adhyatma – spiritual dimension of one's own self, the jivatma
Aham – I
Ahamkara – 'I-ness', self-identity, ego
Ahimsa – non-violence in thought, word and deed
Akasha – ether, space, subtlest of the five mahabhootas
Aksha – the imperishable, that which does not change
Amanitvam – humility, absence of pride
Ananda – divine, transcendental bliss
Anitya – impermanent
Annam – food
Antahkarana – inner instrument, mind composed of manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara
Antar mouna – inner silence
Anubhava – experiences which have affected the senses and the mind
Arta – devotee who prays for relief from personal calamities or pain

Artharthi – devotee who prays in order to fulfil a personal desire

Asakti – attachment

Asat – not existing, unreal

Atma – spirit, soul, individual self

Atma shuddhi – inner purity

Avidya – ignorance

Avyabhicharena – being established through non-fluctuation

Bhagavad Gita – Song of God; Lord Krishna’s discourse to Arjuna

Bhakta – devotee

Bhakti yoga – devotional, meditative process to surrender the ego

Bhava – attitude, feeling

Bhaya – fear

Bhokta – enjoyer

Bhuta – element (see mahabhoota)

Brahman – expansion; Godhead, Ultimate Reality, Supreme Consciousness

Brahmacharya – sublimation or redirection of sexual energy towards spiritual practices

Brahmi sthiti – state of God-realization; the fixed, unchanging, expansive, self-aware vritti

Brahmi vritti – spiritual aspect of the vrittis, the self-aware, individual consciousness

Buddhi – one aspect of the antahkarana: rationality and wisdom; also the greater mind known as mahat in Samkhya

Chetan avastha – the conscious state of mind

Chetana – consciousness

Chitta – one aspect of the antahkarana: the storehouse of impressions

Chitta shakti – energy force of rationality and knowledge

Deva – a self-luminous being

Dharana – one-pointed and constant concentration

Dharma – duty; right thing to be done at the right time; true nature

Dhriti – firmness, stability
Diksha – initiation
Drashta – witness, uninvolved observer
Drashta bhava – witnessing attitude
Dwesha – repulsion, animosity
Guna – quality, attribute
Guru – dispeller of darkness, master
Himsa – violence
Hridayakasha – heart space
Ichha – willpower
Ida nadi – a major pranic channel in the body which conducts the passive aspect of prana
Indriya nigraha – sense control
Indriya sanyam – ability to restrain the senses
Indriyas – sense organs
Ishwara pranidhana – surrender to God
Jada Prakriti – unmanifest primordial Nature which sustains all dimensions of creation including tanmatras, mahabhootas and the aspects of mind (antahkarana)
Jignasu – spiritual seeker
Jivanmukta – a person liberated while still alive
Jivant Prakriti – effulgent nature which sustains the dimensions of time, space and object
Jivatma – individual soul
Jnana – wisdom, knowledge
Jnana indriyas (jnanendriyas) – the senses of cognition
Jnana yoga – yoga in which wisdom guides action
Jnani – knowledgeable or wise person, true knower
Kaala – time
Kama – passion, desire
Kami – one who acts under the influence of passion or desires for pleasure
Karana – causal
Karma – action, cause and inherent effect
Karma indriyas (karmendriyas) – the organs of action
Karma yoga – action with renunciation of attachments and expectations

Karma yogi – one who does his duty without expecting the fruit of action

Karta – doer

Kartavya – duty; performing action with knowledge; doing that which ought to be done

Kartavya dharma – duty as an expression of inherent nature

Kaurava – progeny of Kuru, one hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra who held an inter-family feud against the Pandavas during the Mahabharata war

Kriya – activity

Kriya shakti – activating force, the source of dynamism

Krodha – anger, aggression

Kshanti – forgiveness

Kshara – that which decays

Kshatriya – warrior; one who is chosen to establish righteousness

Kshetra – body, field, dimension

Kshetrajna – the knower of the body, field, dimension; the soul, the immanent aspect of the Supreme Self

Mahabhoota – elements (space, air, fire, water and earth)

Mahakaala – cosmic time

Mahat – the great intelligence, also known as intellect, buddhi

Manas – one aspect of the antahkarana: ability of reflection

Mandala – pictorial representation of esoteric truths

Mantra – mystical combination of sound which liberates the mind from bondage

Mantra diksha – initiation through mantra

Maya – illusion, partial understanding, nescience

Moksha – liberation

Moola Prakriti – see Jada Prakriti

Muhurat – auspicious period to start anything

Mukti – salvation, emancipation; freedom from lower nature

Nara – man, the changeable one

Narayana – the Divine, eternal, unchangeable; Lord Vishnu

Nasikagra drishti – yoga practice focusing the attention on the nose tip

Nidra – sleep

Nirakara – formless
Nirvana – merging in the superconscious state
Nishkama – desireless attitude of concern for the welfare of all, without any personal motivation
Nishkami – one who is beyond the influence of personal desire
Nitya – eternal
Pandava – five sons of Pandu, who held an inter-family feud against the Kauravas during the Mahabharata war
Param dharma – supreme duty, transcendental existence
Pavaka – fire, dynamism, motivation
Pingala nadi – a major pranic channel in the body which conducts the dynamic aspect of prana
Prajna – intuitive experience, knowledge, wisdom
Prakriti – energy with the potential to manifest, Nature
Pramana – direct knowledge, knowledge based on direct experience
Prana – vital energy
Prana shakti – life-force
Pratyahara – state of mind withdrawn from the external sensory world
Purusha – Supreme Consciousness; the individual soul
Purusha Sukta – the collection of mantras in the Vedas for invoking the formless, eternal, all pervasive, Cosmic Self
Purushartha – essential effort in life
Raga – attraction
Rajoguna – quality of dynamism, active and dominating personality trait
Rishi – one who has the ability to see a broader perspective, vedic seer
Sadhaka – spiritual aspirant
Sadhana – regular spiritual practice done for a long time, without interruption, with reverence
Sakama – self-oriented attitude; with desire
Sakara – with form
Samadhi – merging in the superconscious state
Samkhya – one of the six schools of Indian philosophy

Samsara – unending cycle of birth and death; one which goes on changing
Samskara – impression
Sankalpa – positive affirmation, resolve
Sannyasa – renunciation associated with wisdom
Sannyasi – one who has taken the vow of sannyasa; one who is not dependent on the results of action
Sanyam – mastery, control, restraint
Sat – existing, truth
Sattwaguna – quality of purity, light and knowledge
Satyam – truth, real, cosmic nature
Seva – service, offering
Shakti – power; Cosmic Mother
Shaktipat – transmission of energy
Shashanka – moon
Shaucha – purity
Shraddha – faith
Siddhi – perfection; power resulting in control over the physical elements
Sloka – verse
Smashana – cremation ground, graveyard
Smriti – memory; internal knowledge; sacred text
Spandakarika – a treatise of Kashmir Shaivism
Spandan – vibration
Sparsha diksha – initiation through touch
Sthairyam – steadfastness
Sthira – steady
Sthitaprajna – ability to hold the mind steady; one who has steady wisdom
Sthoola – gross
Sukshma – subtle
Swabhava – one's own nature
Swadhyaya – self-study, study of the self
Swarga – heaven, a pleasurable state of mind
Tamoguna – quality of ignorance, laziness, self-indulgence
Tanmatra – essence of the senses (sound, touch, form, taste and smell)

Traita bhava – threefold awareness (of subject, object and practice)
Trataka – to gaze steadily
Triguna maya – the deluding force behind the expression of the gunas
Turiya avastha – the superconscious state of mind
Tyaga – renunciation
Uttam – transcendental, best
Vairagya – dispassion, non-attachment, desirelessness
Vani – speech
Vedas – the most ancient spiritual scriptures of India
Vibhooti – glory, attribute, pure ash
Vichara – thought, reflection
Vijnana – the subtle component of intuitive knowing
Vikalpa – fancy, imagination
Vikaras – evolute, impurities
Viparyaya – wrong knowledge
Visarga – to disassociate from the fruit of actions, separation, liberation
Vishaya – object of desire; object of the senses
Viveka – discrimination
Viveka buddhi – discriminative intellect
Vritti – movement, vortex, whirlpool, strong impression
Vyabhicharena – moving from one object to another searching for pleasure, fluctuating and flirting action
Yajna – sacrifice
Yantra – visual form of mantra; vehicle for liberation of consciousness
Yoga – union between the gross nature and the cosmic nature
Yoga Sutras – text on raja yoga by Sage Patanjali
Yoni – womb, source

Swami Niranjanananda was born in Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh) in 1960. Guided from birth by his guru, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, he came to live at the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger at the age of four where he received training in yogic and spiritual sciences through yoga nidra. In 1971 he was initiated into Dashnami sannyasa, and for twelve years he lived overseas, acquiring an understanding of different cultures and helping further his guru's mission to spread yoga 'from door to door and shore to shore'.



He returned to India in 1983 to guide the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Sivananda Math and Yoga Research Foundation at Ganga Darshan. In 1990 he was initiated as a paramahansa sannyasin and in 1993 anointed spiritual preceptor in succession to Swami Satyananda Saraswati. He established Bihar Yoga Bharati, the first university of yoga, in 1994, Yoga Publications Trust in 2000, and a children's yoga movement, Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal, in 1995. He travelled extensively to guide seekers around the world until 2009, when he received the command to commence a new phase of sannyasa life.

In 2010, he established Sannyasa Peeth, to enable seekers to experience the spiritual and cultural traditions of India in their essence. The year marked his entry into a phase of higher sadhana and tirtha yatra.

In 2013, he conducted the World Yoga Convention in Munger to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga, and launched a new era of yogic renaissance. In 2013 he also commenced the arduous panchagni sadhana. In 2014, he embarked on a Bharat Yatra, an all-India tour, transmitting the gift of yoga to all. Since then, Swami Niranjan has been working to develop the next stage of yogic training and teaching, and has initiated several programs to help people deepen their experience of yoga and imbibe the traditional wisdom. Simultaneously, he has revived various ancient knowledge systems and practices of India.

In 2017, he received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award given by the Government of India, for the outstanding work in the field of yoga.

Author of many classic books on yoga and other spiritual streams, Swami Niranjan is a magnetic source of wisdom on all aspects of yogic philosophy, practice and lifestyle. He ably combines tradition with modernity as he continues to work for his guru's mission.



SATYANANDA YOGA
BIHAR YOGA

The *Bhagavad Gita* is an unparalleled work in the body of world literature. It is an intimate conversation between two friends, a life mantra given by a guru to a disciple, and the bestowal of grace by the Lord on the devotee. In its seven hundred verses, every aspect of human life is seen from an illumined perspective.

Gita Darshan is a compilation of satsangs given by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati in 1998 at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth, Munger. The book is not a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, but an insight into the most significant remarks Sri Krishna made to Arjuna so he could be elevated out of a depressive state of mind, comprehend the cosmic laws and act accordingly. Swami Niranjan reveals the yoga psychology embedded in the text and the tools provided therein to acquire equipoise. Simple, profound, humorous and practical, the book makes the deep wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita* accessible to every individual.



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